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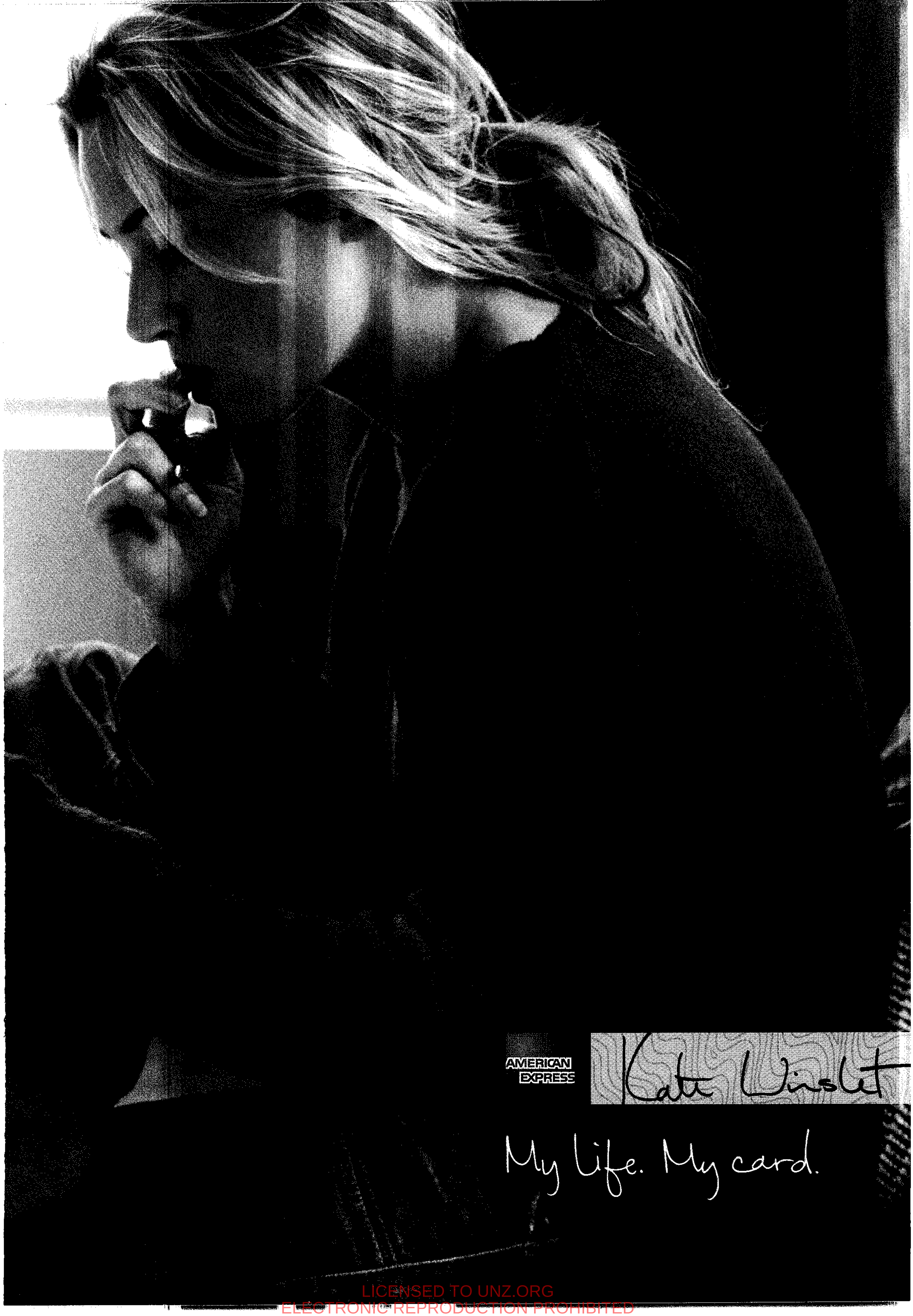
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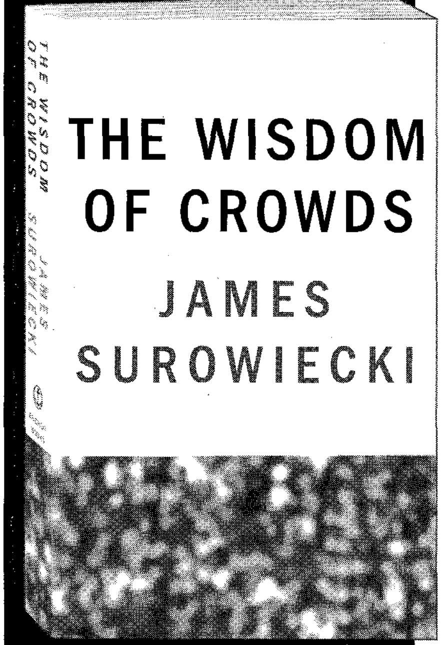

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# THE NEW YORKER

SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

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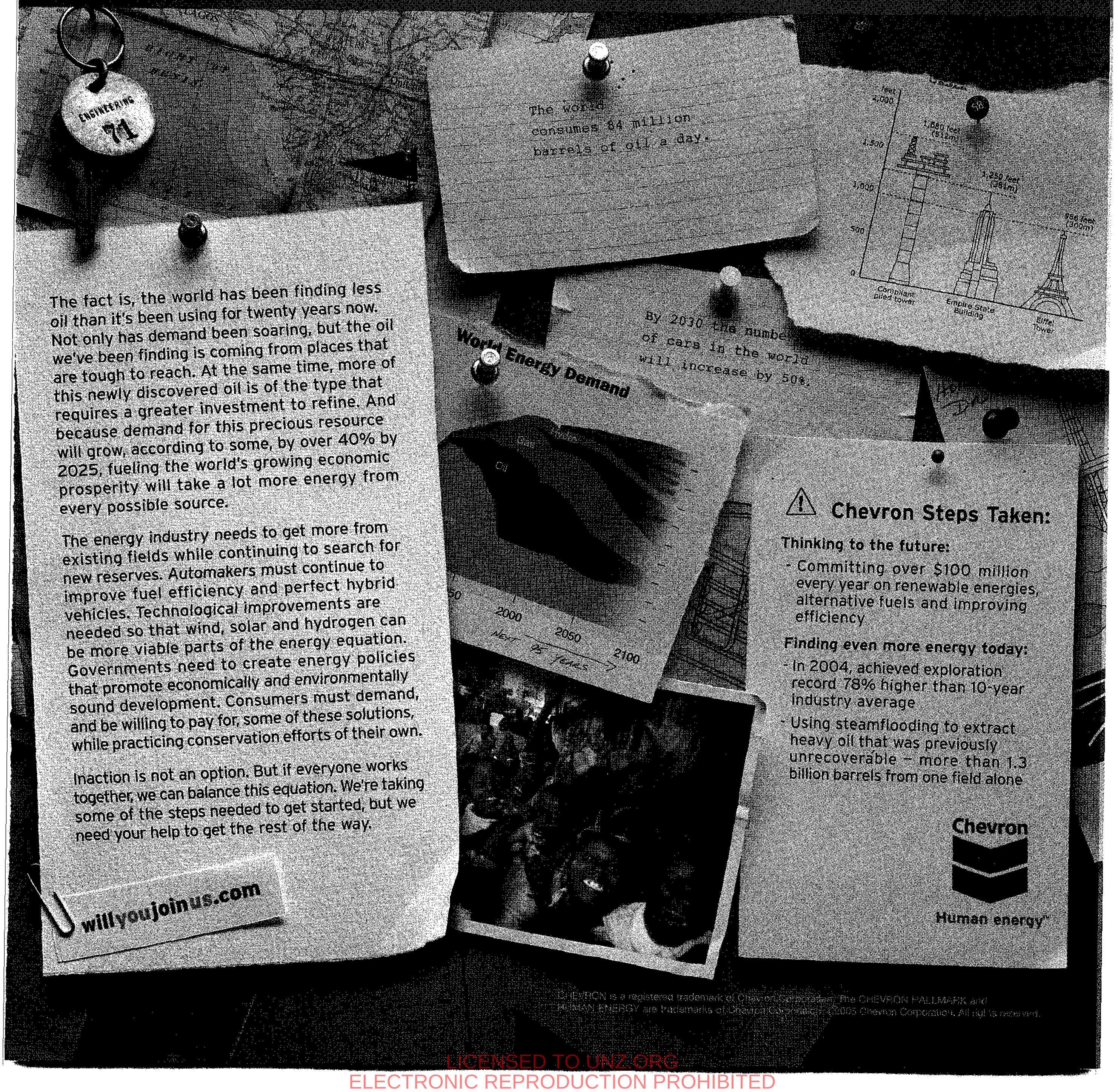

The world consumes 84 million barrels of oil a day.

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The fact is, the world has been finding less oil than it's been using for twenty years now. Not only has demand been soaring, but the oil we've been finding is coming from places that are tough to reach. At the same time, more of this newly discovered oil is of the type that requires a greater investment to refine. And because demand for this precious resource will grow, according to some, by over 40% by 2025, fueling the world's growing economic prosperity will take a lot more energy from every possible source.

The energy industry needs to get more from existing fields while continuing to search for new reserves. Automakers must continue to improve fuel efficiency and perfect hybrid vehicles. Technological improvements are needed so that wind, solar and hydrogen can be more viable parts of the energy equation. Governments need to create energy policies that promote economically and environmentally sound development. Consumers must demand, and be willing to pay for, some of these solutions, while practicing conservation efforts of their own.

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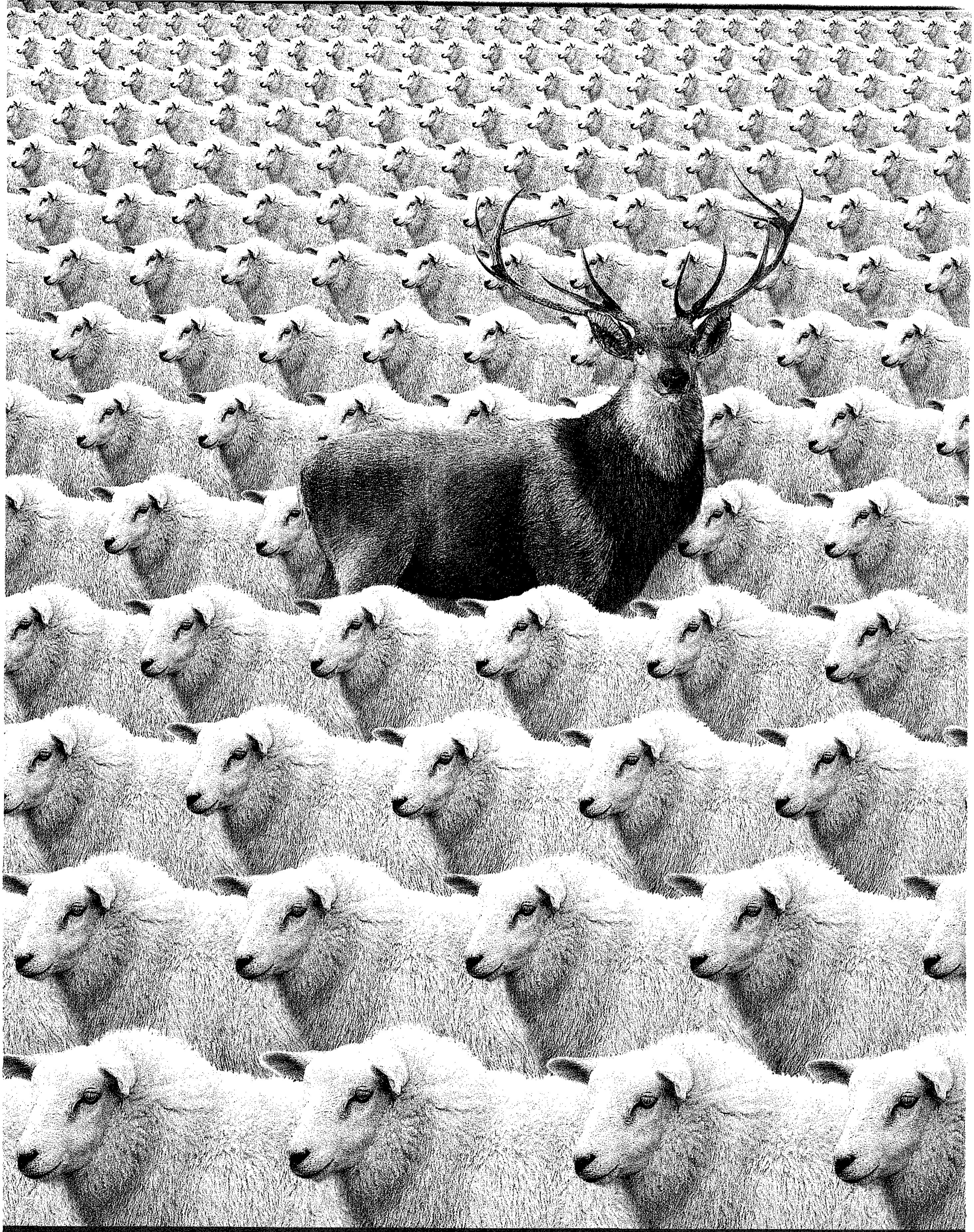

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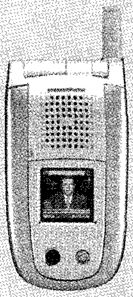

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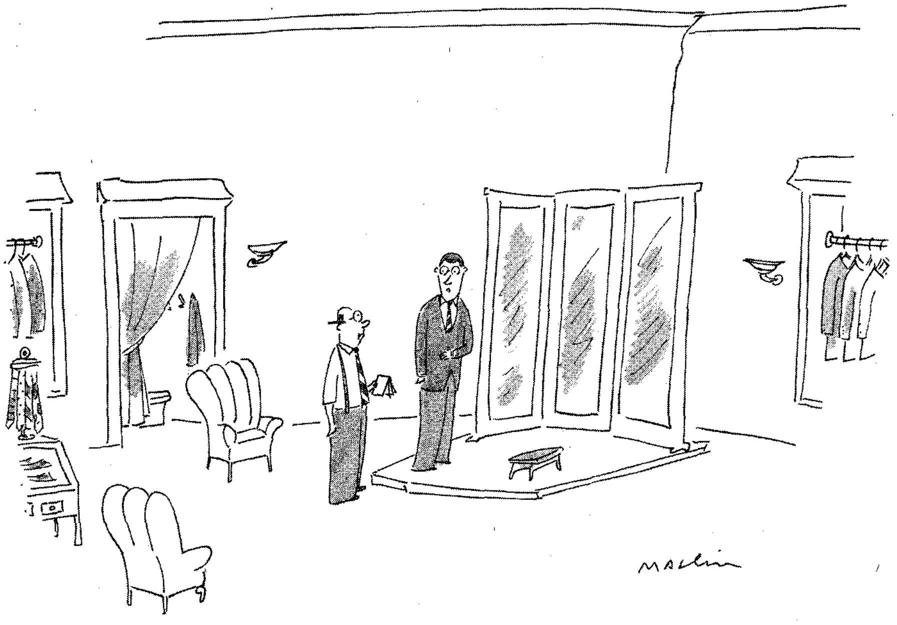
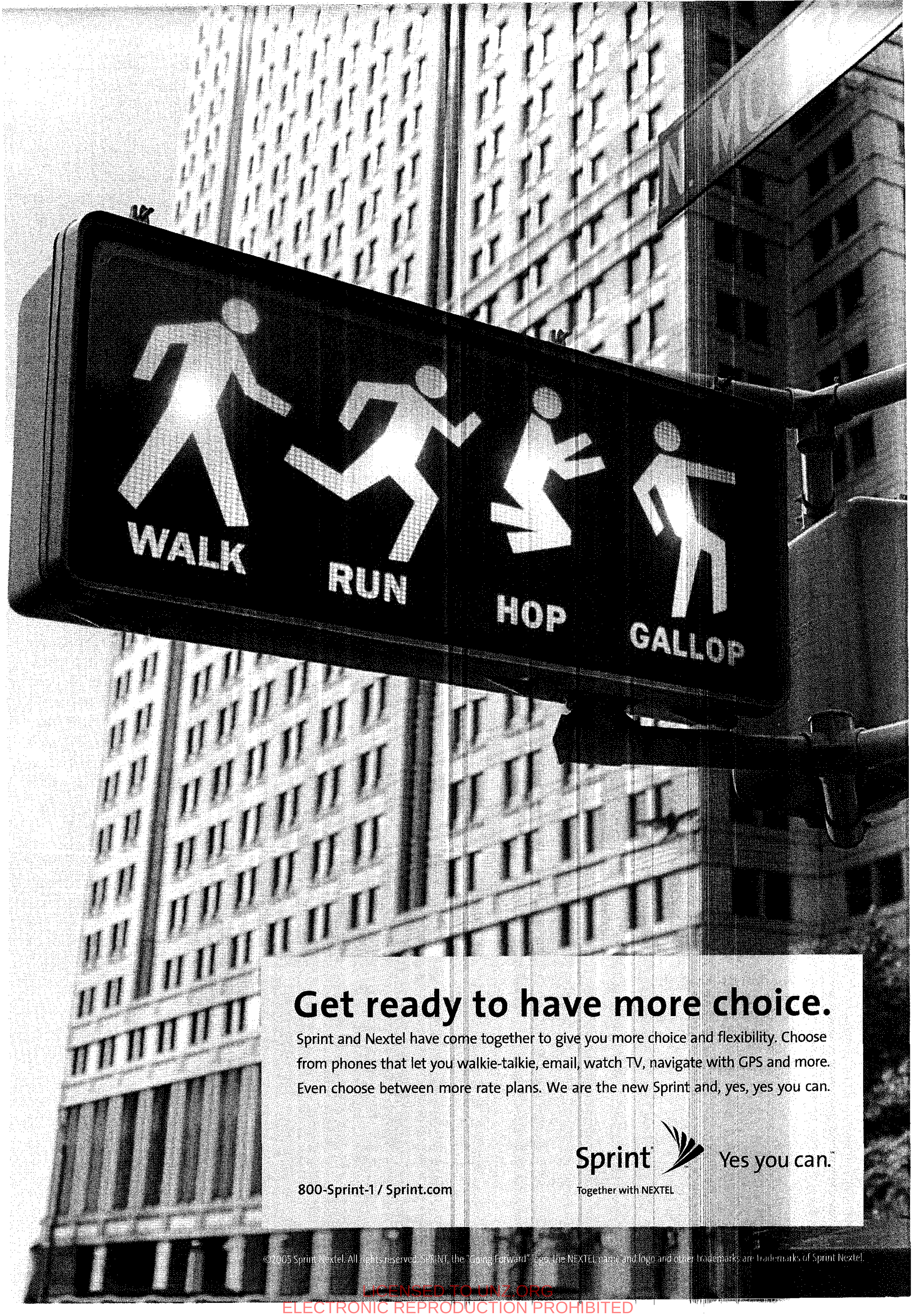


*"Keep in mind that I'll be wearing this over my superhero costume."*



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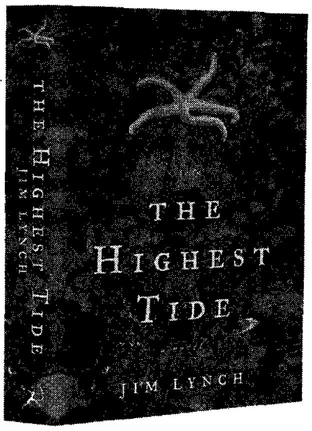

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# THE MAIL

## BUSH'S BIGGER GOVERNMENT

While reading John Cassidy's Profile of Grover Norquist, the president of Americans for Tax Reform, I had to wonder: What has Norquist's conservative activism got him? ("The Ringleader," August 1st.) The Cato Institute has called George W. Bush "the biggest spending president in decades." Observers have resorted to using the term "big-government conservatism" to describe what the Bush Administration and the Republican majorities in the House and Senate are doing now that they have sweeping control of the government. (And we are not by any means just talking about defense-related increases—there is also new spending in areas like the Department of Education, and new health entitlements of the sort that conservatives used to call "liberal spending.") The only thing Norquist has got from the Administration is tax cuts—well, sort of. Since President Bush is growing the government at the same time that he is cutting into its current and future revenues, we are really getting deferred tax hikes. By some reckonings, Bush's deficit will amount to an annual four-thousand-dollar bill for each American household—a bill that we are being forced to put on the national credit card, to be paid later, with interest. Instead of trying to, in Norquist's words, take big government and "drown it in the bathtub," Bush has presided over an astounding flood of government. And Grover Norquist doesn't seem to realize that he's been had.

*Peter Hamlin*
*Middlebury, Vt.*

If Grover Norquist's vision of drowning the federal government in the bathtub ever succeeds, he will be left with the gated community that is the logical extension of his aspirations. Private schools, private roads, privatized Social Security, private enclaves—all guarded by heavily armed vigilantes to keep out those who can't afford them. America will cease to be a great nation, because to be truly great a modern nation must grapple with the greater good—a messy concept that too many conservatives seem willing to entertain only in a Biblical context. Quality education, meaningful health care, a cleaner environment, constructive world engagement, and cultural advancement require an active, responsible federal government and a committed civil service. All that costs money, which means that we have to pay taxes. Our focus should be on improving government, not eliminating it.

*Michael Lahr*
*Arlington, Va.*

## WHAT AFRICA DOESN'T NEED

James Surowiecki, in his discussion of the latest surge of plans for aid to Africa, notes the backlash of economic objections (The Financial Page, July 25th). But what we need to acknowledge, if we are ever really going to help Africa, are the twin basic obstacles that the continent faces. The first is population pressure, which is already at labor-surplus levels, and will surely expand, as birth rates remain very high. The second is the weakness of aid plans in providing jobs for the swelling population, which is promised mainly immediate humanitarian relief. These conditions clearly call for family planning—such as exists in India and, most intensively, in China. But this remedy is resisted so stubbornly by politically conservative fundamentalists in America that neither the aid planners nor the critics will touch it (a kind of "third rail of economic development"). The countries of Africa are still left to drown in overpopulation.

*Edwin P. Reubens*
*Emeritus Professor of Economics*
*City University of New York*
*New York City*

•

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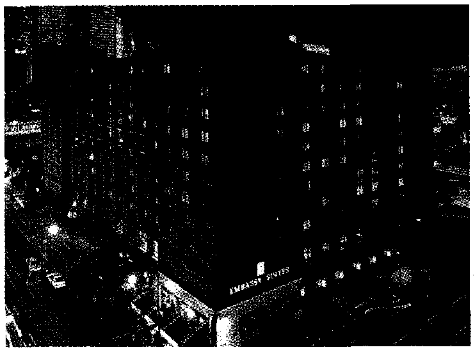

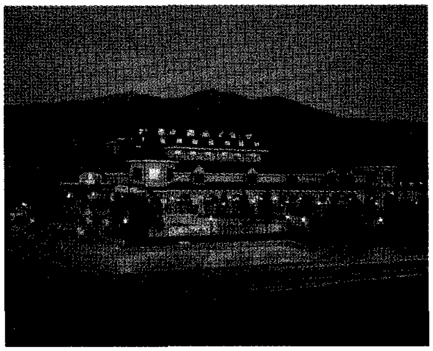

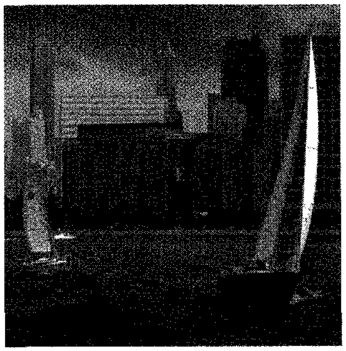

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*JC Hopkins Biggish Band, featuring Queen Esther. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.*

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

## THIS WEEK

### THE THEATRE

#### CULTURE CLASH

Ato Essandoh plays an African refugee whose hiring incenses a group of Irish construction workers in "The Blowin of Baile Gall," the second part of a trilogy by the Boston-based playwright Ronan Noone, now playing at the Irish Arts Center. (See page 14.)

### NIGHT LIFE

#### ETERNAL SUMMER

The guitarist and singer Jack Johnson, the younger generation's clean-cut answer to tropically themed pop stars like Jimmy Buffett, grew up surfing in Hawaii, but New York City has embraced his easygoing melodicism ever since his début album, "Brushfire Fairytales," from 2001. Johnson returns for two nights in Central Park with songs from his new release, "In Between Dreams." (See page 16.)

### ART

#### BROAD STROKES

The three emerging artists in the Studio Museum in Harlem's "Scratch"—William Cordova, Michael Queenland, and Marc André Robinson—are artists-in-residence for 2004-05. The show, whose title is a pun that refers simultaneously to hip-hop culture, the economics of art, and the process of marking a page or canvas, includes video, sculpture, drawing, painting, installation, and photography. (See page 22.)

### DANCE

#### IN THE MARKETPLACE

The choreographer Noémie Lafrance's new ensemble outdoor piece, "Agora," is set in the McCarren Park Pool in Greenpoint, Brooklyn; in it, forty dancers use the vast public space to reflect upon the history and meaning of civic interaction. (See page 24.)

### MOVIES

#### OUTSIDE CHANCE

S. E. Hinton's young-adult novel "The Outsiders" came out in 1967, when she was seventeen. In 1983, Francis Ford Coppola adapted the book with a large cast of future stars, including Tom Cruise, Diane Lane, and Patrick Swayze. This week, a new version of the film, with twenty-two minutes of added footage and an enhanced soundtrack, gets a limited theatrical release, in tandem with a new two-DVD set. (See page 26.)

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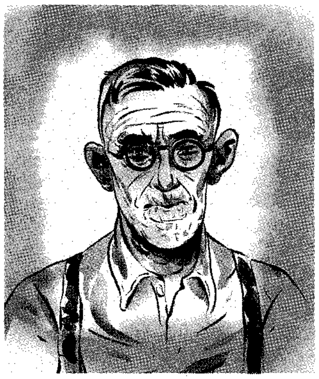
## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## THE PORTRAITIST

For nearly forty years, Mike Disfarmer (1884-1959) was the only professional portrait photographer in Heber Springs, Arkansas. During that time, he made postcard- or wallet-size pictures of virtually everyone in the community—mostly farmers and their families, many of whom returned to Disfarmer's studio again and again, despite his reputation for ornery eccentricity. Disfarmer was gruff and abrupt with his subjects, and how he managed to turn out so many unaffected, unsentimental, and unselfconsciously charming pictures is a mystery, but his body of work is astonishing. This week, both the Edwynn Houk and the Steven Kasher galleries are mounting shows and issuing books of recently unearthed portraits that for the first time allow us to see vintage images. (Previously, the only known Disfarmers were posthumous prints made from the photographer's original negatives.) Disfarmer was no genius, but this busy misfit illuminated the ordinary in a way that echoed Sander and anticipated Penn, finding down-home elegance and genuine soul on Main Street.



—*Vince Aletti*

## THE THEATRE
## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**THE BLOWIN OF BAILE GALL**
Ato Essandoh stars in a new drama by Ronan Noone, about workers on a construction site in western Ireland who bristle when a contractor hires an African refugee (the "blowin" of the title) instead of a local. Directed by David Sullivan. Previews begin Sept. 8. Opens Sept. 13 at 8. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444.)

**THE BREADWINNER**
The refreshingly non-avant-garde Keen Company revives Somerset Maugham's comedy about a middle-class patriarch who decides to skip out on his tedious family. Directed by Carl Forsman. In previews. Opens Sept. 10 at 8. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444.)

**THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE**
A cast of six works with Ralph Lee's ingenious puppets and masks in this streamlined adaptation of Brecht's play by Lee's Mettawee River Theatre. Performances take place in the outdoor garden of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Sept. 9-11 and Sept. 16-18 at 7:30. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 212-929-4777.)

**COLDER THAN HERE**
MCC Theatre opens its twentieth-anniversary season with the U.S. première of a dark comedy by Laura Wade, about a detail-oriented homemaker who plans her own funeral. The cast includes Judith Light, Brian Murray, Sarah Paulson, and Lily Rabe. Abigail Morris directs. Previews begin Sept. 7. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

**COMMEDIA DELL SMARTASS**
The women's theatre collective New Georges presents a new comedy by Sonya Sobieski, about a high-achieving Girl Scout, a fencer who reads Machiavelli, and other eccentrics. Directed by Jean Randich. Previews begins Sept. 9. Opens Sept. 12 at 7:30. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444.)

**DR. SEX**
A love triangle between Dr. Alfred Kinsey, his wife, Clara, and their boyfriend, Wally, has become a musical comedy, with a score by Larry Bortniker and a book by Bortniker and Sally Deering. Directed by Pamela Hunt. In previews. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

**FRAN'S BED**
Mia Farrow stars in Playwrights Horizons' thirty-fifth-anniversary season opener, a play written and directed by James Lapine ("Passion," "Sunday in the Park with George"), about a woman who revisits her memories as she lies in a sickbed, surrounded by her family. In previews. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

**THE GREAT AMERICAN TRAILER PARK MUSICAL**
Set in a Florida trailer park called Armadillo Acres, this musical comedy has a book by Betsy Kelso (who directs), music and lyrics by David Nehls, and a set by Derek McLane ("I Am My Own Wife"). In previews. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE INTELLIGENT DESIGN OF JENNY CHOW**
The Atlantic Theatre Company begins its twentieth-anniversary season with a comedy by the young playwright Rolin Jones, about an agoraphobic adopted girl who builds missile components for the U.S. Army while hunting for her birth mother. Jackson Gay directs. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

**IN THE CONTINUUM**
A dramatization of the plight of African and African-American women whose lives are affected by H.I.V./AIDS comes to Primary Stages, in a play written and performed by Nikkole Salter and Danai Gurira. Robert O'Hara directs. Previews begin Sept. 11. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**IN THE WINGS**
Jeremy Dobrish directs a new play by Stewart F. Lane, about a couple of wannabe actors whose romance is imperilled when one of them gets a lucky break. Previews begin Sept. 9. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

**KISSING FIDEL**
In a new play by Eduardo Machado ("The Cook"), which opens Intar's fortieth season, a Cuban-American in a rabidly anti-Castro Miami family incenses his relatives by declaring his intention to travel to Havana to make peace with Fidel. Michael John Garcés directs. In previews. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

**LATINOLOGUES**
A collection of comic and thoughtful monologues about the Latino experience in America comes to Broadway from the West Coast. Written by Rick Najera (a writer for "Mad TV" and "In Living Color") and helmed by Cheech Marin (of the Cheech and Chong movies). Previews begin Sept. 13. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

**MIRACLE BROTHERS**
The Vineyard Theatre presents a new musical by Kirsten Childs, set in seventeenth-century Brazil, about two brothers, one black, one white. With choreography, featuring capoeira, by Mark Dendy. Tina Landau directs. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

**A NAKED GIRL ON THE APPIAN WAY**
Richard Thomas and Jill Clayburgh star in a new comic drama by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out") about parents whose lives are disrupted when their grown children return from a year abroad with surprising news. Presented by the Roundabout Theatre Company and directed by Doug Hughes. Previews begin Sept. 9. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

**NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL**
The sophomore season of the hardy young showcase presents eighteen new musicals, including "The Ballad of Bonnie & Clyde," by Michael Aman, Oscar E. Moore, and Dana P. Rowe; "The Big Time," a terrorist farce by the witty Douglas Carter Beane; and "Nerds://A Musical Software Satire," a look at the rise of Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, created by Jordan Allen-Dutton, Erik Weiner, and Hal Goldberg. Sept. 12-Oct. 2. (For festival schedule and venue information, visit www.nymf.org.)

**THE PAVILION**
Brian D'Arcy James leads the cast in a Rattlestick Theatre Company production of a new play by Craig Wright ("Orange Flower Water"), about nostalgia at a hundred-year-old dance hall in Minnesota. Directed by Lucie Tiberghein. Previews begin Sept. 9. (224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

**SPIRIT**
Two of the macabre and mischievous creative minds behind "Shockheaded Peter" (the performer Phelim McDermott and the director Julian Crouch) are involved in this entertainment by London's Improbable company, in which three brothers struggle with various forms of conflict. Previews begin Sept. 13. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

## NOW PLAYING

**DEDICATION OR THE STUFF OF DREAMS**
In Terrence McNally's current offering at 59E59 (a Primary Stages production), the rich, ailing, and arch Annabelle Willard (Marian Seldes) goes to meet Jessie and Lou (Alison Fraser and Nathan Lane) at a dusty, dilapidated space she owns, which they want to turn into a children's theatre. Mrs. Willard agrees to let the couple use the building if Lou will grant her two wishes. The first is that he twirl for her. The second is that he put her out of her misery (she is terminally ill) by killing her. As directed by Michael Morris, the scenes in which Mrs. Willard wields her power and Lou grapples with his moral quandary and humiliation are skillfully done. Ultimately, though, it's Morris, not McNally, who allows us to feel something: he mines the actors' body language as well as the pauses between gags for whatever complexity he can convey beyond McNally's talk, talk, talk. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/29/05.) (59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

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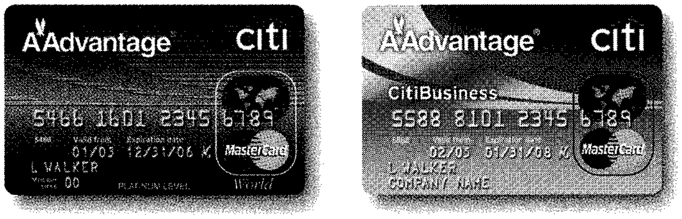

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**LENNON**
This show, or rather, revue, focusses, in standard musical-bio fashion, on Liverpool's "working-class hero" as he makes his way from the cradle to the grave, from his "Twist and Shout" days with the Beatles to his career as a solo artist, producing such ballads of white-male sensitivity as "Give Peace a Chance," "Woman," and "Beautiful Boy." Conceived and directed by Don Scardino, who also wrote the book, "Lennon" presents nine performers in the title role, meant to highlight the protagonist's multiple personae. But the conceit fails, mainly because Scardino seems less interested in the subtleties of interpreting a life story than in putting on a very, very big show with a very, very loud sound system. (8/29/05) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

**MOTHER COURAGE**
A new translation by Marc Blitzstein of Brecht's classic begins the Jean Cocteau Repertory's thirty-fifth season. David Fuller directs. (Bouwerie Lane, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 212-279-4200.)

**ONCE AROUND THE SUN**
In this Faustian fairy tale about the business of rock, Kevin (Asa Somers), the front man of a downtown New York band, abandons his roots to pursue a solo career. With the help of an A-list diva (Maya Days), he launches head first into the perilous world of hit singles and magazine covers. The score, by Robert Morris, Steven Morris, and Joe Shane, is catchy, but it's short on indie cred, which makes the show's swipes at commercial pop feel a little clawless. While the talents of the cast and the design team are apparent, this squeaky-clean musical has all the prepackaged cool of an Urban Outfitters store. Jace Alexander directs. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200.)

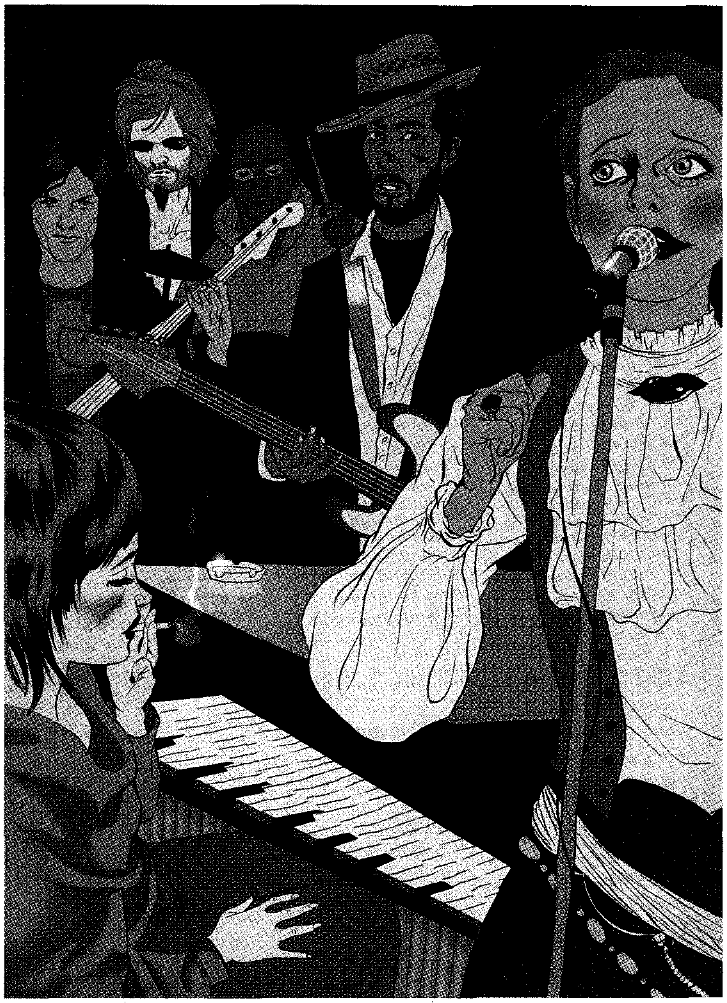
**ONE-MAN STAR WARS TRILOGY**
In this inspired act of madness, the Canadian actor Charles Ross recaps "Star Wars," "The Empire Strikes Back," and "The Return of the Jedi" in a single hour, portraying not only Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Darth Vader, Princess Leia, and Han Solo but R2-D2 (Ross's droid whistle-speech imitation is uncanny), AT-AT walkers, the trash-compactor snake, and even the floating words in the films' opening credits. Directed by TJ Dawe. (Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

**SIDES: THE FEAR IS REAL**
In a series of wickedly funny skits, Mr. Miyagi's Theatre Company—Sekiya Billman, Jane Cho, Paul H. Juhn, Peter Kim, Rodney To, and Hoon Lee—mercilessly caricature Asian-American actors caught up in the posturing, backstabbing, and nail-biting of the audition process. Briskly directed by Anne Kauffman. (45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

**TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA**
The Public Theatre should have a hit on its hands with this rambunctious revival of John Guare and Mel Shapiro's witty adaptation of Shakespeare's romantic comedy, which has an R. & B.- and Caribbean-flavored score by Galt MacDermot ("Hair"). Fleet direction and zesty choreography by Kathleen Marshall ("Wonderful Town") unify the excellent cast. Look for standout performances by Norm Lewis (as the loyal lover Valentine), whose gentle power gets a spicy lift from his hot-hot-hot beloved, Silvia (the feisty Renée Elise Goldsberry), and from the newcomer Oscar Isaac. Isaac, who just graduated from Juilliard, brings a winsome roguery to his portrayal of Valentine's faithless pal Proteus—a role that was played by Raúl Julia in the original production in 1971. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750.)

## *Also Playing*

**ALL SHOOK UP:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100. **ALTAR BOYZ:** Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG:** Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **DRUMSTRUCK:** Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100. **FOOLS IN LOVE:** Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **JOY:** Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 212-239-6200. **THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **MOVIN' OUT:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100. **ORSON'S SHADOW:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **PHILADELPHIA, HERE I COME!:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **THE PILLOWMAN:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **SWEET CHARITY:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING):** DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.


*The Brooklyn-based ensemble Barbez performs this week at Tonic.*

TOMER HANUKA

# NIGHT LIFE
## ROCK AND POP

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**BARBÈS**
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Sept. 10: **Las Rubias del Norte** rearrange Latin big-band music for a handful of instruments, including the glockenspiel. The group is small, but their sound and passion are anything but. Sept. 11: The pianist **Anthony Coleman** reworks the music of Jelly Roll Morton.

**B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL**
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Sept. 9: The **Spin Doctors,** the most successful of the neo-hippie bands to emerge from downtown New York in the early nineties, are back with a new album, "Nice Talking to Me," the first from the original members in eleven years. If the lead single, "Can't Kick the Habit," is any indication, the band should stick to "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong" and other hits if they want to keep their fans from falling asleep. Sept. 11: **Krokus,** a heavy-metal band from Zurich, Switzerland, whose heyday was over by the eighties, had its greatest success with Alice Cooper's "School's Out" and other covers.

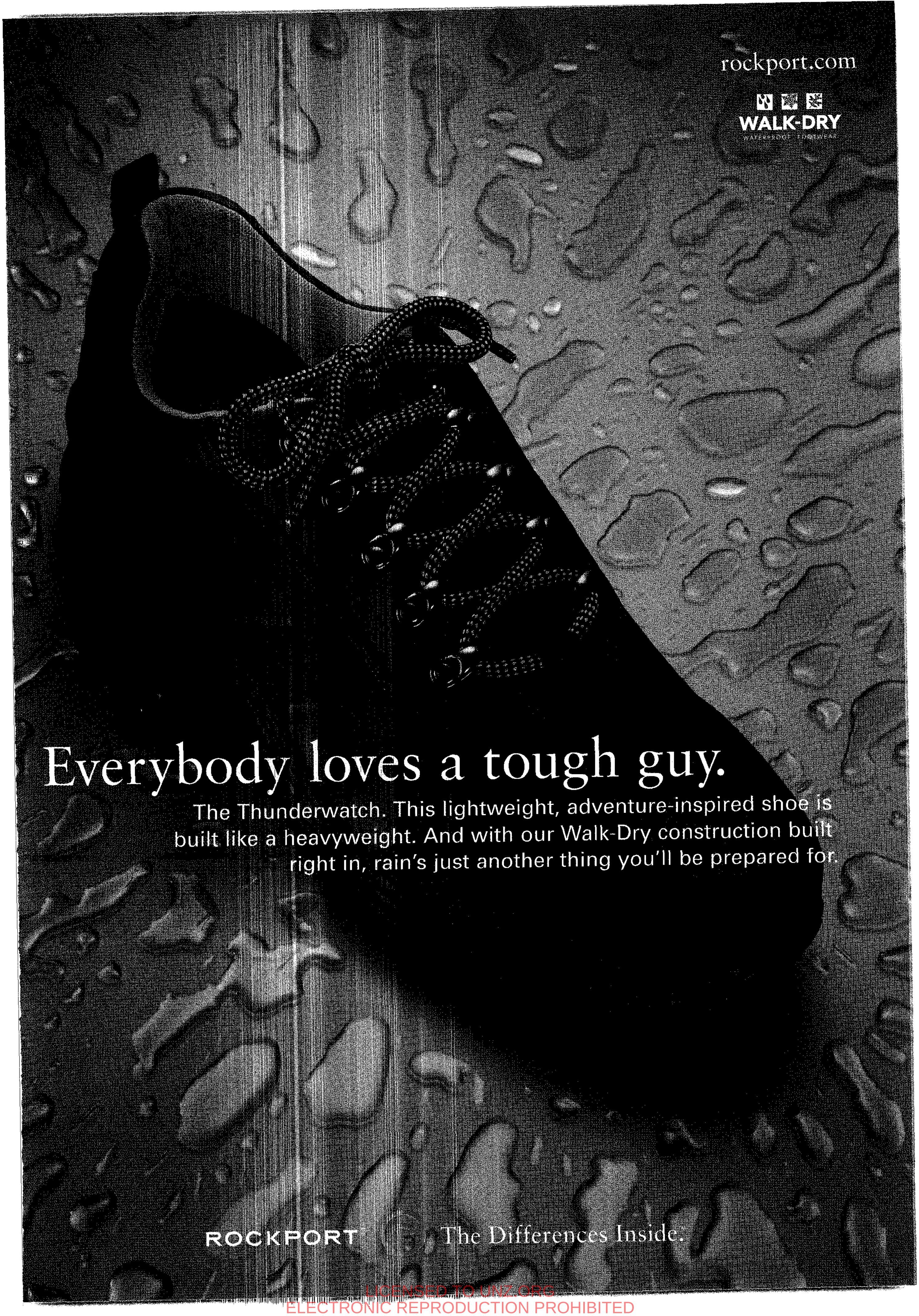
**BEACON THEATRE**
Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 12-13: The symphonic pop of Iceland's **Sigur Rós.**

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Sept. 9: The **National** (see Warsaw). Sept. 10: Terribly appalling or hilariously prurient, depending on one's sensibility, the rock-rap act **Moistboyz** is a side project of Dean Ween (who goes by the name Mickey Moist here). This tour, the first in their decade-plus history, is in support of their latest collection of unprintable song titles, "Moistboyz IV." The album, by the way, is their longest thus far: a full forty minutes. Sept. 11-12: **Seu Jorge,** the super-cool Brazilian singer and actor who starred in "City of God" and who provided comic relief in Wes Anderson's "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou" with his acoustic Portuguese-language renditions of David Bowie songs.

**CAKE SHOP**
152 Ludlow St. (212-253-0036)—Sept. 8: **Blood on the Wall** celebrates the release of its sophomore album, "Awesomer." The Brooklyn threesome's throbbing guitars, straight-ahead drumming, and worry-about-it-tomorrow approach make for some old-fashioned, unpretentious rock and roll. With the guitarist **TK Webb.**

**CENTRAL PARK**
Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 12-13: **Jack Johnson,** a triple threat out of Hawaii, surfs, makes movies, and plays bluesy rock and roll.

**IRVING PLAZA**
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Sept. 7: The Scottish rockers **Idlewild.** Sept. 10: **Greg Brown,** a bona-fide American songwriting treasure, works to expand the meaning of traditional roots music (he once devoted an entire album to William Blake's poetry). The opening act is his daughter, **Pieta Brown,** who shares with him Bo Ramsey, a guitarist and producer who has spent



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more than a decade at the side of Brown senior. The songs on Pieta’s forthcoming record, “In the Cool,” are rootsy, seductive compositions delivered with vocals that are reminiscent of Rickie Lee Jones or Edie Brickell in their youth. Sept. 12: **A-Ha.** The Norwegian teen heartthrobs known for that anthem of the Reagan era “Take On Me” haven’t played the United States in some twenty years. Their repertoire hasn’t changed much in the interim: expect soft-edged rock and well-worn hits. Sept. 13: The cello trio **Apocalyptica** emerged from Helsinki in the mid-nineties as little more than a novelty act, playing stone-faced instrumental covers of Metallica favorites. A few albums and almost a decade later, Apocalyptica has made a career out of crossing chamber music with heavy metal.

**JOE’S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Sept. 9: The singer-songwriter **David Poe.** Sept. 10 and Sept. 13: **Nouvelle Vague** is a French pop project (two male producers, a bevy of young female singers) that gives New Wave and post-punk songs from the early eighties a seductive bossa-nova spin. Their eponymous début album transforms “Too Drunk to Fuck,” “Guns of Brixton,” “Love Will Tear Us Apart,” and various other Doc Martens standards into dinner-party-friendly fare. Sept. 12: Twenty-five years ago, **Lene Lovich** made a name for herself with quirky pop that was both arresting and accessible. She was a premier member of the burgeoning synthesizer-based scene (Thomas Dolby was an early collaborator). After a clutch of memorable singles, all delivered with a slight Yugoslavian accent, she just about vanished. She has a forthcoming album, “Shadows and Dust.”

**KNITTING FACTORY**
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Sept. 13-14: **Feist,** a Canadian singer and former member of Broken Social Scene who has been getting attention for her solo début, “Let It Die,” makes music that will someday be a staple of lite radio. At the moment, though, it resonates with hipsters.

## POP NOTES
## ROLLING BACK THE YEARS

Though promotional copy suggests that the title of the Rolling Stones’ twenty-fifth studio album, **“A Bigger Bang”** (Virgin), was inspired by the band’s “fascination with the scientific theory about the origin of the universe,” almost every song deals with a woman. Sometimes she’s sweet (“Biggest Mistake”), sometimes she’s mean (“Oh No, Not You Again”), and sometimes she’s so screwed up that Mick has to practice tough love (“Look What the Cat Dragged In”). And make no mistake, it’s Mick. As a singer and songwriter, Keith takes his usual two shots—one sounds like a jingle for a motel chain, the other weds soulful vocals to an unforgivable pun—but the bulk of this collection of regretful-playboy confessions, not to mention defiant-playboy boasts, points to only one man. While “Bridges to Babylon” in 1997 monkeyed around with drum loops and sound effects, this album goes back to the basics, if slickly: riffs skitter, wind, and explode on cue. While there’s nothing that will make fans forget “Paint It Black” or “Shattered” (or even “Dirty Work”), there’s plenty here, especially on the fast ones, that will make you remember them, and that’s something.

**“No Direction Home: The Soundtrack”** (Columbia) is the companion CD to Martin Scorsese’s documentary about Bob Dylan’s early years, and it’s also the seventh volume of the artist’s ongoing bootleg series, in which old live tracks, alternate versions, and outtakes are dusted off and displayed as priceless treasure. Priceless may be a stretch—it’s retailing for twenty-five bucks, give or take—but some of what’s here is certainly treasure: a punky “Maggie’s Farm” from the 1965 Newport Folk Festival; a brooding, paranoid “Ballad of a Thin Man” recorded live with The Band in 1966; and substantially different takes of songs like “Highway 61 Revisited” (siren whistle subtracted) and “Tombstone Blues” (backup vocals added). Except for a 1959 home recording of the previously unreleased original “When I Got Troubles,” the very early material is less revelatory. For a more focussed look at acoustic Dylan, there’s **“Live at the Gaslight 1962”** (Columbia), a collection of folk-club performances that includes germinal versions of “A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall” and “Don’t Think Twice, It’s All Right,” along with standards like “Barbara Allen” and “Handsome Molly.” The Gaslight tapes have been bootlegged frequently over the years; this official release is available only at Starbucks, though there is some dispute over whether or not coffee was Dylan’s stimulant of choice.

*—Ben Greenman*

**MADISON SQUARE GARDEN**
Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 10: The New York Salsa Festival celebrates its thirtieth anniversary with **Victor Manuelle, India, Tito Rojas, Oscar D’Leon, Sonora Poncena,** and others. Sept. 13: The **Rolling Stones** continue to gather no moss. Their new album, “A Bigger Bang,” includes a politically charged, if somewhat contrived track, “Sweet Neo Con,” and by all reports their live show remains a spectacle to behold.

**ROSELAND**
239 W. 52nd St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 9: London’s **Bloc Party,** the most celebrated band of the neo-post-punk movement, apes the signature sounds of the Gang of Four and the Cure.

**ROTHKO**
116 Suffolk St., at Rivington St. (212-475-7088)—Sept. 7: The emo-quirk band **Say Hi to Your Mom** is the work of a twenty-something transplant from L.A. named Eric Elbogen. With the **Mobius Band.** This indie electro-rock trio, which started out in the rural Massachusetts town of Shutesbury, received a great deal of praise earlier this year for its EP, “City vs. Country.” The group has since moved to New York and released a full-length début, “The Loving Sounds of Static.” It’s an urbane synthesis of solid-state effects and straight-ahead power pop.

**S.O.B.’S**
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—Sept. 13: A night of reggae with the **Morgan Heritage.**

**SOUTHPAW**
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Sept. 9: The soulful Detroit hip-hop act **Platinum Pied Pipers** is the producer Waajeed, a founding member of the group Slum Village, and the multi-instrumentalist Saadiq. Their début album, “Triple P,” features their fellow Motor City musicians Jay Dee and MC Lacks.

**TONIC**
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—The music of **Barbez** conjures an imaginary place full of narrow, crooked streets that are paved with ancient, damp cobblestones. The Brooklyn-based ensemble looks to Eastern Europe for inspiration (the lead singer, Ksenia Vidyaykina, is from Russia), and its expansive rock draws on such composers as Brecht, Schnittke, and Satie. But Barbez is firmly lodged in the present. It employs electronic elements, such as the theremin (played by the virtuoso Pamelia Kurstin) and the Palm Pilot (turned into an instrument by the bassist Dan Coates), and its original compositions, written mostly by the guitarist and band leader Dan Kaufman, capture the angst, joy, and strangeness of life in the twenty-first century. The band returns to one of its favorite haunts on Sept. 10 to celebrate the release of its third album, “Insignificance.”

**WARSAW**
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-0505)—Sept. 7: The **National,** a quintet of Ohio transplants who live in Brooklyn, play overtly romantic, au-courant indie rock.

**WEBSTER HALL**
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Sept. 8: **Matisyahu,** a local Hasid who combines hip-hop and roots reggae. The opener is the **Mobius Band** (see Rothko).

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL**
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Starting Sept. 6: The irrepressible singer **KT Sullivan** and the pianist **Mark Nadler** pay tribute to the lyricist Dorothy Fields, the wit behind “I’m in the Mood for Love,” “On the Sunny Side of the Street,” and other Great American Songbook classics.

**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Sept. 7-10: The **Barry Harris** quintet, featuring **Charles Davis.** Most bop pianists approach their keyboards like racehorses, but Harris is a seducer with a satin touch—he always places melody before virtuosity. Davis, his longtime foil, is a winning tenor and baritone saxophonist.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Sept. 6-11: The guitarist **John Scofield** brings his admiration for Ray Charles to the stage, performing music from “That’s What I Say,” his new tribute to the departed genius.

**DIZZY’S CLUB COCA-COLA**
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Sept. 6-11: This month the club is home to the Women in Jazz Festival, which starts off with the singer **Angela Bofill.**

**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Sept. 7-11: There’s more than a little seventies fusion-funk vibe going on in the vibraphonist **Stefon Harris’s** group Blackout. But Harris isn’t on a complete retro trip; he’s an in-the-moment improviser with ambitious plans for uniting the past with the present. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

**JAZZ GALLERY**
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—This worthy, off-the-beaten-path club is celebrating its tenth anniversary this month. **Roy Hargrove,** a longtime supporter, stops by Sept. 7-11 for “The Trumpet Shall Sound,” a weeklong series in which he’ll be joined by fellow-hornmen. They include **Darren Barrett** (Sept. 7), **Claudio Roditi** (Sept. 8), **Tom Harrell** (Sept. 9), **Nicholas Payton** (Sept. 10), and **Marcus Belgrave** (Sept. 11).

**JAZZ STANDARD**
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—**Russell Malone** makes guitar nerds drool with his hurdling technique. To his credit, though, he curbs his enthusiasm often enough to let in some measured lyricism. He’s here Sept. 8-11 with a quartet to record a live album.

**THE SLIPPER ROOM**
167 Orchard St. (212-253-7246)—Sept. 8: The **JC Hopkins Biggish Band,** which recently released its first album, “Underneath a Brooklyn Moon,” continues its Thursday-night residency at this Lower East Side boîte. The Biggish Band harkens

back to the days when nylon stockings were a novelty and men wore hats. Its young leader, the piano player Hopkins, writes swinging material tailor made for a vacuum-tube radio, and it's delivered with a timeless flair by the lead singer, Queen Esther.

**THE STONE**
Avenue C at 2nd St. (No phone)—The avant-leaning trumpeter **Roy Campbell, Jr.,** here Sept. 8, curates this month. Sept. 10: The guitarist **Joe Morris.** Sept. 11: The commanding pianist and composer **Dave Burrell** celebrates his birthday with a solo concert. Later that night Burrell is joined by the bassist **Michael Formanek** and the drummer **Guillermo E. Brown.** (For more information, visit www.thestonenyc.com.)

**TONIC**
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Sept. 11: **Satoko Fujii,** an adventurous pianist with great scope, can rumble like Cecil Taylor or go gently pointillist in the manner of Paul Bley.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Sept. 6-18: With the drummer **Paul Motian,** the saxophonist **Joe Lovano,** and the guitarist **Bill Frisell** on board, who needs a bass player? This magisterial trio can be both poetic and raucous in the course of a set, unafraid to indulge in tonal and rhythmic contusions or coolly bask in lyrical waters. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

**WILLIAMSBURG JAZZ FESTIVAL**
This four-day Brooklyn-based gathering, which runs Sept. 8-11, is long on up-and-coming artists, but room has been made for a few heavy hitters, including the trumpeter **Dave Douglas** (Sept. 9) and the saxophonist **Steve Coleman and 5 Elements** (Sept. 10). (For more information, visit www.wjazzfestival.com.)

## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Matisse: The Fabric of Dreams, His Art and His Textiles,"** a revelatory, achingly beautiful show, pairs items from the artist's personal fabric collection with paintings and graphic works in which they played crucial roles. Through Sept. 25. ♦ Two recent installations are on view in **"Tony Oursler at the Met: 'Studio' and 'Climaxed.'"** The first contemplates influences on the artist through an assemblage of pieces by the likes of Jacqueline Humphries, Rem Koolhaas, and Kaare Rafoss. The second, more traditional Oursler work is a giant, lumpy potato head with flames and a blinky face projected on it, its mouth voicing demented and hilarious threats, boasts, and sorrows. Through Sept. 18. ♦ **"John Townsend: Newport Cabinetmaker"** presents a few dozen pieces by a prominent Colonial American furniture-maker alongside work by his contemporaries. Through Sept. 25. ♦ **"Sol LeWitt on the Roof: Splotches, Whirls, and Twirls."** A warm-weather installation in the roof garden, featuring five spiky stalagmite sculptures and a wall drawing. Through Oct. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro, 1865-1885"** chronicles the careers of two friends who gave each other a leg up into brave new styles and techniques, though it quickly becomes clear that Cézanne, the younger artist by a decade, vaulted much higher. Through Sept. 12. ♦ Beginning a year after the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens and continuing for the next decade, **Frank Gohlke** recorded the utter devastation and gradual regeneration of a site that had been blasted back to prehistory. In the process, he turned into a latter-day Ansel Adams. Although his aerial views and panoramic vistas of what appear to be primordial mountainsides aren't conventionally picturesque, they do have a tough, undeniable magnif-

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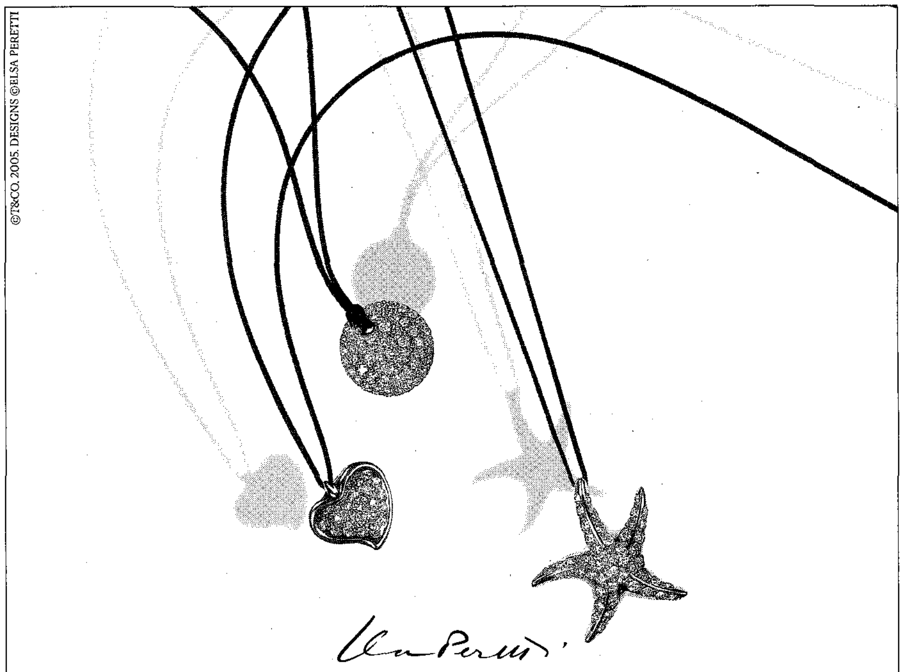

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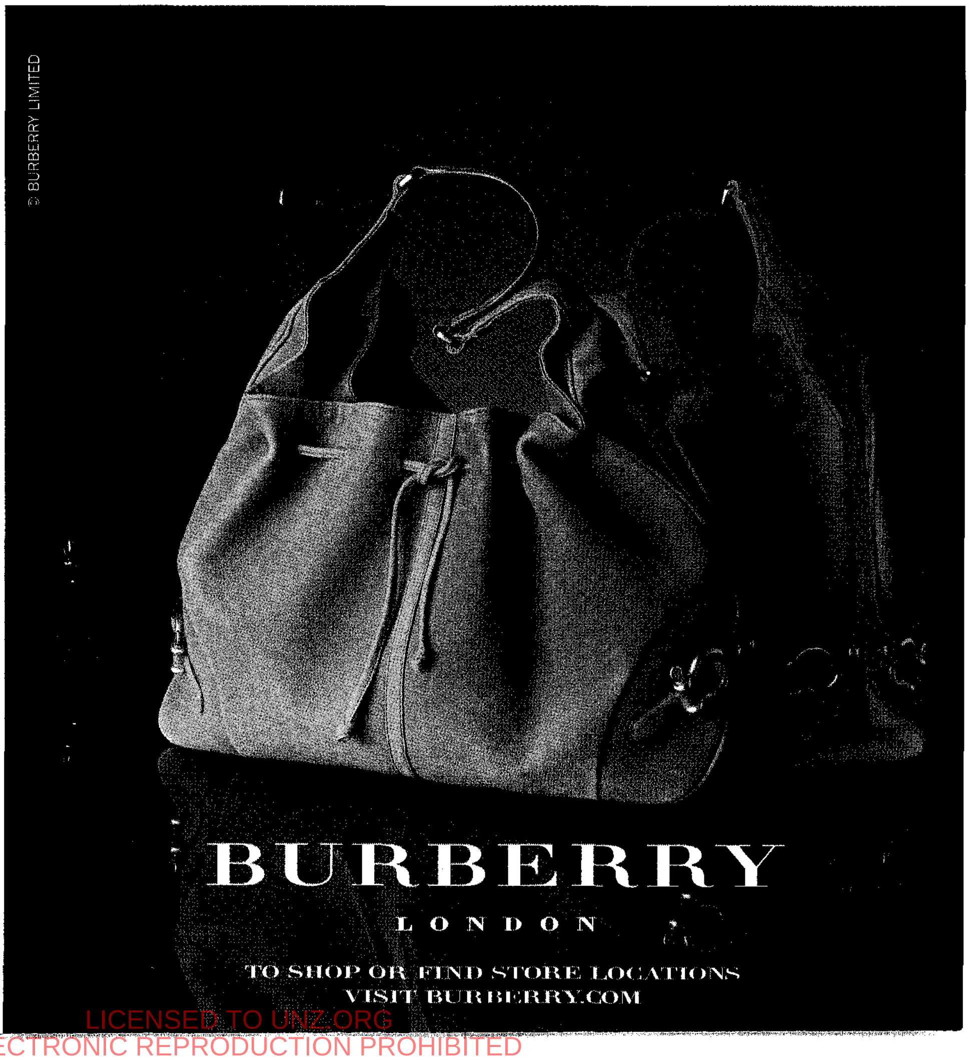

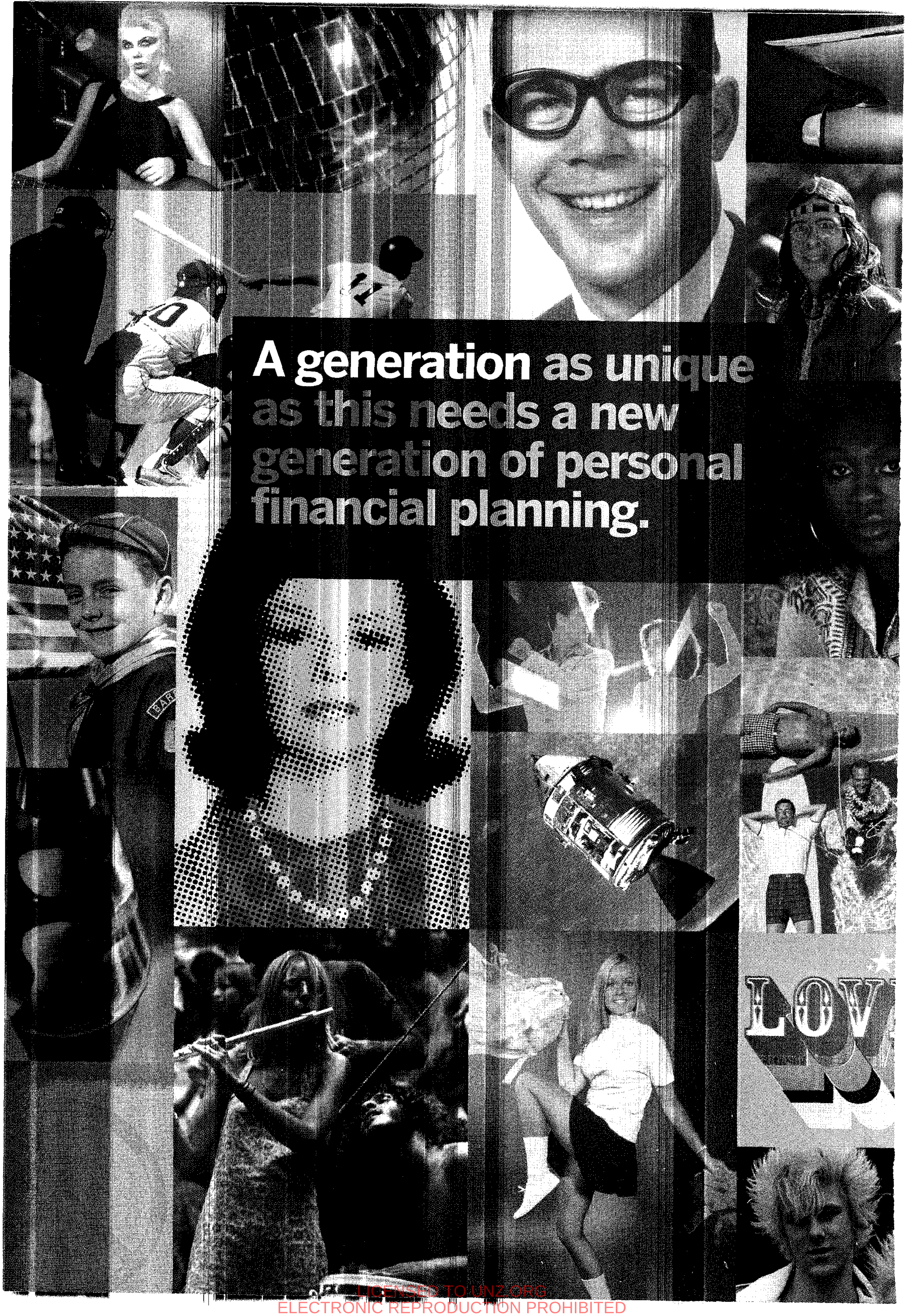
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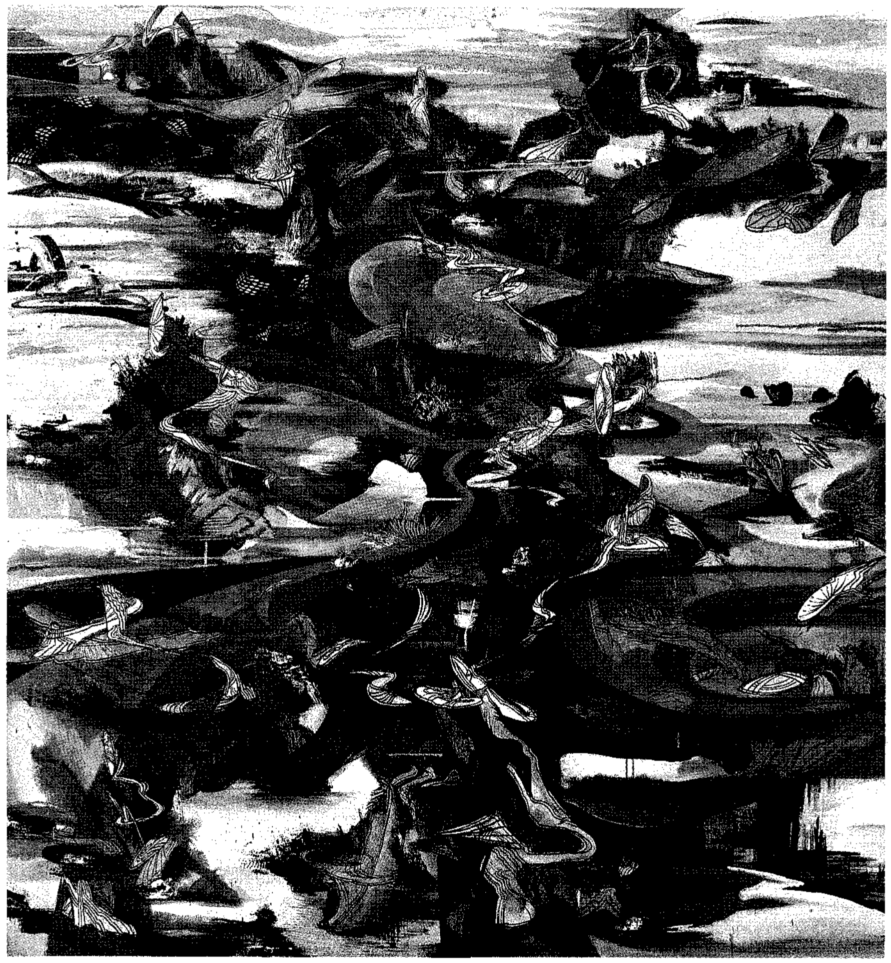

*A show of new paintings by Suling Wang opens at Lehmann Maupin on September 8.*

icence and the presence of modern classics. Through Sept. 26. ♦ **"The High Line"** details Field Operations and Diller Scofidio & Renfro's ambitious urban rails-to-trails scheme for the abandoned elevated tracks that run along the West Side from Gansevoort Street to Thirty-fourth Street. Through Oct. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—Selections from the permanent collection are on display, including a clutch of canvases by Vasily Kandinsky in the museum's recently inaugurated Kandinsky Gallery. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Robert Smithson,"** a retrospective of drawings, constructions, and collages, includes filmed, photographed, and sketched documentation of the iconic "Spiral Jetty." Through Oct. 23. ♦ Work by eight artists, including Terry Winters, Ati Maier, and Matthew Ritchie, is on display in **"Remote Viewing: Invented Worlds in Recent Painting and Drawing."** Through Oct. 9. ♦ The eclectic gathering of works from the permanent collection in **"Landscape"** ranges from Jasper Johns's white maps to Ed Ruscha's rows of L.A. streets and Roni Horn's eerie comparison of the body and the earth, "Becoming a Landscape" (1999-2001). Through Sept. 18. ♦ **"Banks Violette: Untitled"** contemplates the romantic sublime with a model of a ruined church cast in salt and music composed by the black-metal musician Snorre Ruch. Through Oct. 2. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM AT ALTRIA**
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2453)—**"Past Presence: Childhood and Memory"** is a slight but intriguing show about childish urges and experiences. With work by Charles LeDray, Gary Simmons, Robert Beck, and Peggy Preheim. Through Oct. 13. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries,"** a review of recent developments in the study of dinosaurs, provides insight into how the animals moved through their world. Through Jan. 8, 2006. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

**CHELSEA ART MUSEUM**
556 W. 22nd St. (212-255-0719)—Eighty diminutive etchings from an original 1799 print run of Goya's **"Los Caprichos"** are interspersed with a show of related contemporary work, **"Here Comes the Bogey-Man."** Through Sept. 24. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

**DAHESH MUSEUM OF ART**
580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. (212-759-0606)—On the museum's tenth anniversary, **"The Dahesh Collection: Celebrating a Decade of Discovery"** honors the academic tradition that ruled supreme before modernism. Through Sept. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**JEWISH MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Joan Snyder: A Painting Survey, 1969-2005"** includes more than thirty works that chart the artist's navigation of the narrows between macho formalism and the more personalized aesthetics of second-wave feminism. Through Oct. 23. ♦ **"Old Country"** (directed by Allen Kaeja and Mark Adam, 2004) is a twenty-four-minute film that combines dance, theatre, and music to tell the story of a small Polish community on the brink of the Holocaust. Dancers from the Toronto-based Kaeja d'Dance company dressed in period dresses and suits perform with crisp, expressive movements. They break free from the confines of the stage, appearing in historic homes, gardens, and rural settings around Ottawa. The lush cinematography is accompanied by a plaintive score by Edgardo Moreno, and there is almost no spoken dialogue or narrative until the very end, when the setting suddenly jumps to present-day Canada and a voice reads a letter by Kaeja's father, written in an internment camp in Germany during the period when nearly his entire family perished. Through Oct. 31. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 9, and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

**MUSEUM OF SEX**
233 Fifth Ave., at 27th St. (212-689-6337)—**"Men Without Suits."** The subtitle of this largely photographic exhibition, "Objectifying the American Male Body," suggests a dry, scholarly study that, happily, never quite materializes. A time line sketches in the history of the representation of the male nude from the kouroi to Caravaggio and beyond, paying special attention to developments in gay civil rights, since the bulk of material on display was produced with a contemporary audience in mind. It ranges from classic studies of musclemen to equally stylized but more frankly seductive images of handsome jocks created by mid-century physique photographers whose reputation remains mostly underground. Photos by Baron von Gloeden, George Platt Lynes, and Imogen Cunningham huddle in one corner, but they have a hard time competing with the vivacious homoeroticism of Bob Mizer, Bruce Bellas, Lon Hanagan, and Don Whitman. Through Jan. 31. (Open Sundays through Fridays, 11 to 6:30, and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

**NEUE GALERIE**
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"War/Hell: Master Prints by Otto Dix and Max Beckmann."** Through Sept. 26. (Open Fridays, 11 to 9, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

**STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM**
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—The vague rubric **"Scratch"**—a curator's reference to d.j. scratching and universal, artistic notions of "mark-making, chance, cancellation"—is actually a tight fit for three artists more prosaically connected by their status as S.M.H. artists-in-residence. Michael Queenland is the poet of the group, with his traced images of Shaker furniture, found wasps' nests, and delicate photographs of soap bubbles. William Cordova is the streetwise bricoleur, assembling piles of objects depicting, for instance, the life and times of the gypsy-cab driver. Marc André Robinson is the vocal, Malcolm X-quoting politico, but he's also the inveterate stylist. His baroque construction "Throne for the Greatest Rapper of All Time" is a sculpture made of wood furniture fragments that bows and flares upward, like a fantastic musical instrument or an antique flying machine. Through Oct. 23. ♦ Although **"hrlm: pictures,"** a survey of Harlem photographs, is seriously overshadowed by "Scratch," it has its attractions, not the least of which are the nineteen-thirties James Van Der Zee and Aaron Siskind images that open it up. Works by Gordon Parks and Jules Allen and a wonderful series of 1979 street portraits by Dawoud Bey follow, but historical perspective ends there, swamped by the immediacy of contemporary material, most of it from newcomers. Among them, H. Eugene Foster, Brooke Jacobs, and Eric Henderson stand out, along with the team of Hunter Tura and Jeannie Kim, who highlight the running theme of real estate with a grid of small, deadpan interiors overlaid with six- and seven-figure price tags and collectively titled "I Can't Afford to Live in Harlem." Through Oct. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.*

**ROGER PHILLIPS**
Looking at sculpture built for the outdoors in a gallery feels a bit like riding a bike in the house. Phillips's stainless-steel frames support aluminum

disks and lozenge shapes painted bright yellow, red, and orange. They often swing freely, like Calder mobiles, and re-create the odd sensation of looking at street signs up close and realizing they're much larger than they appear from the road in a car. Photos mounted on the walls of the narrow space give a view of the works in their proper habitat: a field, a sculpture park, or, in the case of "Seven Red Disks on Sulphur Mountain, California," a lush landscape overlooking an undulating line of purple mountain peaks. Through Sept. 16. (JG Contemporary, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 212-535-5767.)

**NEIL WELLIVER**

A memorial exhibition for the artist, who died this year, centered on a group of large landscapes from the late nineteen-seventies and early nineteen-eighties depicting the Maine woods. Opens Sept. 8. (Alexandre, 41 E. 57th St. 212-755-2828.)

**"MALE DESIRE TWO"**

The publication of Jonathan Weinberg's "Male Desire: The Homoerotic in American Art" is the impetus for revisiting an exhibition mounted a decade ago. This installment includes work that's arguably homoerotic, some that's merely homosocial, and some that proves eroticism is in the eye of the beholder. Vito Acconci's stiff conceptual "Retouch" photographs fit into this latter category, as does Eric Fischl's serene watercolor nude. Others, by Mapplethorpe, Warhol, Hockney, Wojnarowicz, Peter Hujar, and Paul Cadmus, are more frankly sexual. Keith Haring's postcard of the tower in Pisa and Weinberg's own painting "Provincetown Lifeguard" are also apt examples. Tom of Finland is thankfully absent. Through Sept. 10. (Mary Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 212-397-0669.)

### *Short List*

**JANET CARDIFF:** Starts at the kiosk on Central Park South at Sixth Avenue; a credit card or photo I.D. is required to take out the audio equipment. Thursdays through Sundays, 10 to 3:30. For more information or for reservations, call the Public Art Fund at 212-980-3942. Through Sept. 11. **MIKE DISFARMER:** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070. Opens Sept. 8. **ERLE LORAN:** Smithsonian Archives of American Art Research Center, 1285 Sixth Ave. 212-399-5015. Through Oct. 7. **JAMES TURRELL:** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Through Sept. 24. **"BREAKING GROUND":** The Horticultural Society of New York, 128 W. 58th St. 212-757-0915, ext. 113. Through Sept. 9. **"MEN OF MEXICO":** Throckmorton, 145 E. 57th St. 212-223-1059. Through Sept. 17. **"REPEAT PERFORMANCE":** Anthony Grant, 37 W. 57th St. 212-755-0434. Through Sept. 17. **"WORKS ON PAPER":** Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Through Sept. 10.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**TOM BURCKHARDT**

One room is filled with an installation made of drawings on cardboard depicting the objects in an artist's studio; the other contains new enamel-on-wood paintings. Opens Sept. 8. (Golden, 539 W. 23rd St. 212-727-8304.)

**PETER CAMPUS / ANTHONY MC CALL**

Campus is the draw here, but the more interesting work is by McCall, a British-born, New York-based artist who's fallen under the art-world radar in recent decades (this is his first New York gallery appearance since the nineteen-seventies). A slide projector in "Miniature in Black and White" (1972) flashes eighty-one different images—mostly geometric abstractions—onto a piece of Plexiglas propped a few inches from the lens. The results are strobe-like, creating an afterimage on the viewer's retina. Proposals for installations involving projected light and a map of lighthouses in England demonstrate the range of his commitment to light as material. Campus is represented by two black-and-white projections, "Head of a Sad Young Woman" and "Head of a Misanthropic Man" (both from 1977) that take portraiture into the temporal realm and recall Warhol's "Screen Tests." Through Oct. 1. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-255-8450.)

**ADAM CVIJANOVIC**

A seventy-five-foot-long painting that imagines Los Angeles ten minutes after the law of gravity has been revoked and a large ceiling painting of objects in the artist's apartment. Opens Sept. 8. (Bellwether, 134 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-929-5959.)

**ROBERT INDIANA**

Recent sculptures built from found items like animal bones, farming equipment, and salvaged wood. Opens Sept. 9. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave. 212-563-4474.)

**SOL LE WITT**

A series of gouache-on-paper works made in 2005, titled "Horizontal Lines, Black on Color." Through Oct. 15. (Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.)

**DANICA PHELPS**

A show titled "Wake" presents documentary drawings of the artist's morning routine, focussing on time spent in the shower. These are paired with a series of "calendar drawings" that trace her monetary transactions over the course of weeks or months. Through Oct. 1. (Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700.)

**SULING WANG / STEFANO ARIENTI**

The Taiwanese artist Wang's large, calligraphic, abstract paintings, notable for their ebb and flow, are paired with an installation and new work by the Italian sculptor Arienti. Opens Sept. 8. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

**"BONDS OF LOVE"**

The curator Lisa Kirk redresses the glaring deficiency of women in high-profile group shows this summer with an exhibition that poses the question: is a show of work exclusively by female art-

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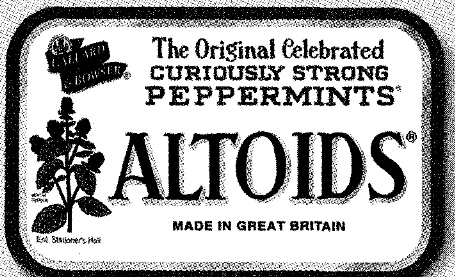
SADOMINTOCHIST?

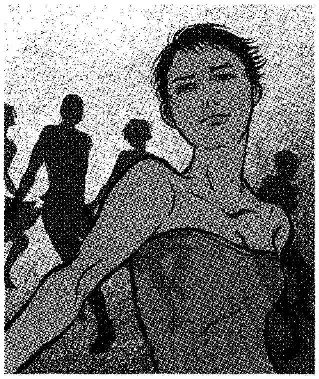


THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS

curious? altoids.com

## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## DEEP THOUGHTS

Noémie Lafrance, who specializes in site-specific work, has staged a dance in a spiral staircase and another in a parking garage. Now she has taken on a more problematic location. Greenpoint's McCarren Park Pool—a fabulous, Hollywoodesque thing the size of a football field—was built in 1936 as a W.P.A. project. Eventually, however, the pool, like the neighborhood, got pretty nasty. In 1984 the city boarded it over, whereupon it became a haunt for skateboarders during the day and for neckers and raccoons at night. In the last few months, under Lafrance's direction—and with considerable financial help from the concert promoter Ron Delsener, who also has his eye on the space—the pool has been unboarded and remortared and cleaned up. For three weeks, starting Sept. 13, Lafrance's company of forty will present a dance, "Agora," there—not in water (to seal the pool would cost a lot more) but in the empty pit. The piece, Lafrance says, will consist of "people doing different things at the same time, being in their own story," like city folk.


YUKO SHIMIZU

—*Joan Acocella*

ists necessarily "feminist"? Jessica Benjamin's 1988 feminist-psychoanalytic text "The Bonds of Love" provides a jumping-off point for thinking about "self and other," and most of the work here attempts to explode that duality. Tara Mateik's audiovisual "Case 133. Psychosexual Metamorphosis" describes a male patient in the eighteen-sixties who thought he was a woman; Marilyn Minter's gritty Photo-Realist closeup of a woman's high heels expresses a violent femininity; Laura Parnes's videos dramatize scenes from Kathy Acker's muscular fiction; and Aleksandra Mir uses beauty products to imitate that interstellar phallic symbol, the space rocket. With Laura Anderson Barbata, Anne Collier, and Sherry Wong, among others. Through Sept. 24. (John Connelly Presents, 526 W. 26th St. 212-337-9563.)

### *Short List*

**MIKE DISFARMER:** Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978. Opens Sept. 8. **JUSTIN LOWE:** Printed Matter, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-925-0325. Through Sept. 24. **TAM OCHIAI:** Team, 527 W. 26th St. 212-279-9219. Through Sept. 24. **BILL OWENS:** Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500. Through Sept. 24.

## GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

**JOHN BEECH**
Beech takes a page from the book of John Baldessari, who's known for blocking out the faces of people in photographs to eliminate expression and, therefore, narrative. In his "Dumpster Drawings," Beech paints over inanimate objects—parked cars, for instance—in black-and-white photographs mounted on aluminum, achieving stationary blob subjects that blur the lines between abstraction and representation. A particularly pleasing example is made by coloring in the diamond shapes outlined by a chain-link fence. A series of "Rotating Paintings"—Plexiglas lazy Susans painted with pale, monochrome shades of green or yellow or orange—accomplish another form of slippage, steering painting into the arena of sculpture, or perhaps vice versa. Through Sept. 10. (Peter Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441.)

## DANCE

**DANCENOW/NYC: "THE FESTIVAL"**
The funky modern-dance jamboree kicks off its eleventh season with a broad range of programs, including "40Up," a series honoring Dance Theatre Workshop's fortieth anniversary, which presents dances by downtown choreographers over the age of forty. Among the participants (many of whom got their start at D.T.W.) are Doug Elkins, David Parker and the Bang Group, and Heidi Latsky, who offers an excerpt from her upcoming piece "Disjointed," set to Michel Legrand's music for "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg." The lineup for the festival's returning "Base Camp" series (held at D.T.W. this year, at 219 W. 19th St.) includes Chris Elam/Misnomer Dance Theatre, Dixie Fun Dance Theatre, Monica Bill Barnes, and Aszure & Artists, among others. And the new series "Sacred@Synod House" brings dance and sacred music together on the grounds of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. (Sept. 7-9 at 7:30, Sept. 10 at 2 and 7:30, Sept. 11 at 3, and Sept. 13 at 7:30. For complete festival schedule and venue information, visit www.dancenownyc.org, or call 718-850-2488. Through Sept. 17.)

**"AGORA"**
The innovative site-specific choreographer Noémie Lafrance ("Descent," "Noir") presents a new work, set in the vast, empty, aqua-floored McCarren Park Pool in between Greenpoint and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in which dancers explore and evoke the foundations of urban society. (Lorimer St. between Driggs and Bayard Aves. For tickets and information, visit www.sens-production.org. Sept. 13 at 8. Through Oct. 1.)

**COMPAGNIA DANZA FRANCESCA SELVA**
In its U.S. début, the Sienese company presents "Camminando-XYZ," a modern dance splashed with Italian romanticism and set to music by Bach, Mozart, Nuñez, and Albéniz. The silent, naturalistic opening is built from fragments of simple actions: a girl reading a newspaper as she meanders, a man jogging in circles, a woman striding around in heels and lingerie. Once the music and the full-wall black-and-white projections start, the movement evolves into a dance of supple bending and slow, sensual turns, punctuated by rapid rhythmic steps and smooth floor work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Sept. 8-10 at 8:30.)

**"THE WATER STATION"**
Robyn Hunt and Steve Pearson, founders of the Pacific Performance Project, bring Shogo Ohta's choreographed play ("Mizu No Eki" in Japanese) about the power of silence to HERE. On a set that features a water source and a mountain of shoes, twelve actors and dancers weave modern dance and Ohta's "slow tempo" method into their interpretation of the drama. (145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 7-8 at 8:30, Sept. 9 at 8:30 and 10:30, Sept. 10 at 4 and 8:30, and Sept. 11 at 4.)

**"X KILLS Y, AND VICE VERSA"**
In Kiyoko Kashiwagi's satirical dance comedy, inspired by anime cartoons, a mad scientist invents a killer female robot. (The Chocolate Factory, 5-49 49th Ave., Long Island City, Queens. 718-482-7069. Sept. 8-10 at 8.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC
## OPERA

**NEW YORK CITY OPERA**
In the midst of an "Opera-for-All Festival" (which will feature appearances by the actress Cynthia Nixon and the pop-music idol Rufus Wainwright), New York's populist company gets on with the business of starting the fall season. Sept. 7 at 6:30 and Sept. 10 at 1:30: City Opera's 2004 season began with a radiant and rewarding run of Strauss's "Daphne," and now the company offers us another Strauss gem—**"Capriccio,"** the composer's last opera, an erudite but appealing discourse on the relationship of words and music. (The ravishing Sextet and the final scene are justly loved.) Pamela Armstrong, as the Countess, leads a cast that also includes Lisa Saffer, Ryan MacPherson, George Mosley, Mel Ulrich, and Eric Halfvarson; George Manahan, City Opera's music director, conducts. ♦ Sept. 10 at 8: Gilbert and Sullivan's **"Patience,"** a hit in Tazewell Thompson's new production at Glimmerglass Opera in 2004, comes downstate with a cast that includes Tonna Miller, Myrna Paris, Michael Ball (as Reginald Bunthorne, a sendup of Oscar Wilde), Timothy Nolen, and Kevin Burdette; Gary Thor Wedow. ♦ Sept. 11 at 1:30: Mark Lamos's pastel-blue production of **"Madama Butterfly,"** a company favorite, begins its annual run. With Jee Hyun Lim (in the title role), Kathryn Friest, Brandon Jovanovich (as Pinkerton), and Jake Gardner; Ari Pelto. (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

**AMATO OPERA**
Eight different casts—an admixture of aspiring young professionals and hearty amateurs—rotate through a production of **"Tosca,"** performed under the direction of Anthony Amato, the chamber company's patriarch, at its intimate theatre in the East Village. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. Sept. 10 at 7:30 and Sept. 11 at 2:30. Through Oct. 2.)

## RECITALS

**BARGEMUSIC**
Sept. 8-9 at 7:30: The pianist Jose Ramos Santana has the barge to himself to perform a re-

cital of works by Albéniz ("Iberia," Books 1-3) and Parsi. ◆ Sept. 10 at 7:30 and Sept. 11 at 4: Two esteemed young musicians—the pianist Steven Beck and the cellist Clancy Newman—join the veteran violinist Mark Peskanov for an evening of piano trios by Mozart (Piano Trio in E Major, K. 542), Beethoven (the "Kakadu" Variations), and Dvořák (the passionate Trio in E Minor, "Dumky"). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

**DIAMANDA GALÁS**
This Greek-American soprano, pianist, and performance artist has always been a darling of the downtown avant-garde, but the fire of her art comes from the most ancient of sources: a rage against injustice worthy of a modern-day Elektra. Her latest electroacoustic work, "Defixiones, Orders from the Dead," is an "operatic mass" that honors those who perished in the Asia Minor genocides of 1914-23; her texts are drawn from such writers as Adonis, Michaux, and Celan. (Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University, 3 Spruce St. 212-279-4200. Sept. 8 and Sept. 10 at 8.)

**COUNTER)INDUCTION: "*CRITICAL DISTANCE*"**
A group of new-music experts (including the pianist Blair McMillen and the violinist Asmira Woodward-Page) offer music by academic composers both edgy (Eric Moe, Alexandre Lunsqui) and distinguished (Karel Husa). The program begins with an American première by the Parisian theatrical composer Georges Aperghis. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A W. 13th St. Sept. 9 at 8. A donation is suggested.)

**AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM: "MOSTLY MODERN"**
The Forum, which uses its sleek little concert hall to proudly promote Viennese music old and new, begins a wide-ranging festival of modern and contemporary works with an all-Webern recital (including the Three Songs, Op. 25, set to poems by Hildegard Jone) offered by the soprano Anna Maria Pammer and the pianist Clemens Zeilinger. (11 E. 52nd St. Sept. 9 and Sept. 12 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300.)

**ARGENTO CHAMBER ENSEMBLE: "FRENCH CONNECTIONS"**
A recently formed new-music ensemble that (despite its Italian name) showcases the works of French and Francophile composers offers a small classic by Druckman (the tart "Valentine," for double bass) along with premières by Michel Galante, Michael Klingbeil, and Philippe Hurel ("4 Variations," a jazz-influenced percussion concerto that employs fifteen large *almglocken,* or cowbells). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Sept. 10 at 8:30.)

**JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS**
Moving back to its acoustically satisfying longtime venue, the Jens Nygaard tribute ensemble continues the late conductor's penchant for obscure repertory, combining a Divertimento by Michael Haydn and a Piano Quintet by Bartók (who knew?) with Joseph Haydn's Piano Trio No. 25 (the "Gypsy"). The pianist Adam Neiman and the violinist Philippe Quint join the ensemble. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Sept. 12 at 2 and 7:30.)

**MUSICIANS FOR HARMONY**
This impromptu fall concert, first offered in the wake of 9/11, has become an annual tradition that aims to bridge the gap between the musical styles of East and West. The violinist Arnold Steinhardt and the cellist Peter Wiley (both of the Guarneri Quartet), the Shanghai String Quartet, the Iranian *ney* player Siamak Jahangiri, and the Musique Sans Frontières ensemble offer a program that includes music by Beethoven, Janáček (the Quartet No. 1, "Kreutzer Sonata"), and Hossein Alizadeh. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Sept. 13 at 7:30.)

## OUT OF TOWN

**SOUTH MOUNTAIN CONCERTS**
The short but high-class autumn series (which is largely sold out on subscription) continues with a concert by the commanding Emerson String Quartet, which will offer works by Mozart (the "Dissonant" Quartet), Shostakovich (the Fourth Quartet), and Brahms (the Quartet in A Minor). (Route 7, Pittsfield, Mass. Sept. 11 at 3. Remaining tickets at the door. For more information, see www.southmountainconcerts.org.)

## MOVIES OPENING

**CAMPFIRE**
Joseph Cedar directed this Israeli drama, about a widowed mother who wants to join the new religious settlement movement in the West Bank, which she can't do unless she remarries. In Hebrew. Opening Sept. 9. (Village East Cinemas.)

**CÔTE D'AZUR**
A comedy about a group of family members on vacation who get entangled in affairs and misunderstandings. Directed by Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau. In French. Opening Sept. 9. (Angelika Film Center and Chelsea Cinemas.)

**EDGE CODES.COM: THE ART OF MOTION PICTURE EDITING**
A documentary about film editing, including interviews with George Lucas and Thelma Schoonmaker, directed by Alex Shuper. Opening Sept. 8. (Pioneer Theatre.)

**THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE**
Laura Linney plays a lawyer defending a controversial Catholic priest (Tom Wilkinson), in a thriller

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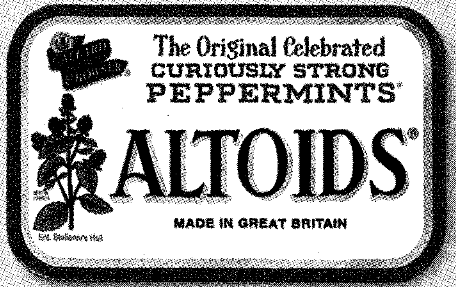
SCREAMS SHE CAN'T FAKE



THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS

curious? altoids.com

about demonic possession. Directed by Scott Derrickson. Opening Sept. 9. (In wide release.)

**KEANE**
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Sept. 9. (Sunshine Cinema.)

**THE MAN**
Samuel L. Jackson plays an F.B.I. agent and Eugene Levy plays a dental-supply salesman, in an odd-couple action comedy. Les Mayfield ("Blue Streak") directed. Opening Sept. 9. (In wide release.)

**MUSIC FROM THE INSIDE OUT**
Daniel Anker directed this documentary, which interweaves the music of the Philadelphia Orchestra with the personal stories of its musicians. Opening Sept. 9. (Cinema Village.)

**THE OUTSIDERS—THE COMPLETE NOVEL**
Francis Ford Coppola has added a new beginning, ending, and soundtrack to his 1983 adaptation of the S. E. Hinton novel. With C. Thomas Howell, Matt Dillon, Diane Lane, Ralph Macchio, Rob Lowe, Patrick Swayze, Emilio Estevez, Tom Cruise, and Leif Garrett. Opening Sept. 9. (Empire 25.)

**STEAL ME**
A drama directed by Melissa Painter, about a fifteen-year-old kleptomaniac searching for his mother, a prostitute in Montana. Opening Sept. 9. (Village East Cinemas.)

**TOUCH THE SOUND**
Thomas Riedelsheimer ("Rivers and Tides") directed this documentary, about Evelyn Glennie, a Grammy-winning drummer who is deaf. Opening Sept. 7. (IFC Center.)

**AN UNFINISHED LIFE**
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Sept. 9. (In wide release.)

## NOW PLAYING

**THE ARISTOCRATS**
In this one-of-a-kind documentary, made by Paul Provenza and Penn Jillette (of Penn & Teller), some of the greatest comics of the day take turns telling a simple dirty joke from vaudeville days. The joke is about a show-business family, and it features a short setup, a two-word punch line, and an infinitely expandable middle section detailing the special nature of the family's act. In that redolent middle, the comics exercise their virtuosity at excremental, incestuous, and bestial themes. The joke is told tenderly by Paul Reiser, urbanely by Martin Mull, seductively by the sublime Sarah Silverman, gravely and with much loving, superfluous detail by George Carlin, and shrilly, with an emotion bordering on hysteria, by the inspired pixie Gilbert Gottfried. Comics normally smothered under the blanket of family entertainment—Whoopi Goldberg, Jason Alexander, Bob Saget—come alive in wild-eyed bursts of obscene invention. After a few variations, the words no longer shock. The familiar obsessions, as they come off here, are so gleefully extravagant—another organ, another fluid, another outrage!—that one experiences them as a desire to embrace life more fully, or at least to embrace telling more fully.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 8/29/05.) (In wide release.)

**ASYLUM**
A disappointment, at once silly and chilly, from David Mackenzie, who made "Young Adam" with Ewan McGregor. The wildness that flared around that movie has abated with ominous speed. Natasha Richardson, who also executive produced the new picture, stars as Stella Raphael, who, with her young son, accompanies her husband, Max (Hugh Bonneville), to his new position at an asylum. There they find, in ascending order of strangeness, Dr. Cleave (Ian McKellen) and his brooding patient Edgar (Marton Csokas), whose career includes stints first as a sculptor and then as a homicidal maniac. His sexual adhesion to Stella is perhaps the least surprising development in any movie this year; the whole film, indeed, rejoices in the predictable, right down to the ruined tower where the lovers meet. McKellen enjoys the nonsense for what it is, whereas Richardson treats it with a vitreous solemnity. The result, with its constrained, Britain-bashing archness, could have been made a third of a century ago.—*Anthony Lane* (8/22/05) (In wide release.)

**THE BAXTER**
In this genial but neutered independent comedy by the young writer-director Michael Showalter, who also stars, the title refers to the loser in love. Showalter plays Elliot Sherman, a repressed Brooklyn C.P.A., who meets two women—a high-powered socialite (Elizabeth Banks) and a quirky rural misfit (Michelle Williams)—and spends the rest of the film stumbling into the right choice. Showalter, a member of the former comedy troupe the State, writes funny and smartly constructed scenes, but as a director he offers, for better and for worse, a comic actors' showcase. He himself is unsure whether to be Jack Lemmon or John Cleese, but the sublime Michelle Williams holds the screen magnetically with her dewy-eyed channelling of the young Shirley MacLaine. The film is knowingly modelled on such Hollywood romances as "The Apartment," and Showalter also borrows their constraints: there's no sex, politics, worldly context, or ethnic diversity. In the classic comedies, sparks flew although the friction stayed offscreen. Here there's no friction at all.—*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

**BROKEN FLOWERS**
Jim Jarmusch linking up with Bill Murray is a case of Mr. Cool meeting Mr. Cool, and the resulting silences are deafening. Murray plays Don Johnston, who is allegedly an aging Don Juan. But Murray is so quiet and self-contained that he seems to want nothing. When he sets out on the road to visit the women he was dating twenty years ago, one of whom may have conceived a son with him, the movie turns into a kind of elegant alienated travelogue. Some of the actresses Murray encounters do extremely well in their brief appearances, especially Sharon Stone, as a hard-luck blonde who doesn't demand too much from life, and Jessica Lange, as an iron-willed fraud who "talks to animals." Jarmusch is good at the evanescent emotions of lost love and unfulfilled lives, but the movie is all gesture and unspoken longing. It's all of a piece, and well observed, but it's an art object without the energy or courage to be a work of art.—*D.D.* (8/8 & 15/05) (In wide release.)

**THE BROTHERS GRIMM**
Terry Gilliam had a good idea—to re-create the origins of the fairy-tale-spinning Brothers Grimm—but, as it turns out, the movie is yet another noisy, hyperbolic, digital farce, with people jumping in and out of the frame and turning into corpses and then coming back to life, trees endlessly moving around the woods, and much general tumult, and the movie quickly becomes tedious. As the more intellectual and scholarly Jacob Grimm, Heath Ledger is often charming, but Matt Damon, as Wilhelm Grimm, wearing Napoleonic-era locks that make his features look as bulbous as those of a carved puppet (if that was the point, it doesn't work to the actor's advantage), never finds anything to play. Gilliam, of course, has a wild visual imagination and an exuberant sense of character, but the comedy is so frenetic it quickly cancels itself out. With Lena Headey as a fearless maiden, Peter Stormare and Jonathan Pryce trying hard to be grotesque, and lots of crones, misshapen villagers holding pitchforks, and the like.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

**THE CONSTANT GARDENER**
A frenzied adaptation of a John le Carré novel, if that is not a contradiction in terms. Ralph Fiennes plays a refined but bumbling British diplomat who arrives in Kenya with his belligerent new wife (Rachel Weisz). Impatient with niceties, she goes after the pharmaceutical giants, who are testing a new drug and covering up the results. When she dies, apparently in an accident, her loving and uncomprehending husband is forced to retrace her steps and rekindle some of her fire. The movie is a curious, roiling mix of genres that stirs marital romance into a heated indictment of a vast, conspiratorial crime. Thriller junkies will find it tempting but fragmentary; how is one supposed to take a car chase that ends with both drivers getting out for a chat? The director is Fernando Meirelles, who has imported the busy style of his last picture, "City of God," and given it an extra jolt; the images of Africa, forever in hot pursuit of one another, leave you not so much exhilarated as exhausted, long before the

## TABLES FOR TWO
### PERRY ST

176 Perry St. (212-352-1900)—Inside Jean-Georges Vongerichten's latest venture, which anchors the middle tower of Richard Meier's glass-sheathed celebrity housing projects on the West Side Highway, the most prominent features are load-bearing concrete columns (supporting, among the famously flipped lofts, Vongerichten's own home). Unlike the tarted-up V Steakhouse, at the Time Warner Center, Perry St is more spartan. There are no colors, no curves, and only eight entrées to choose from. And the best items, barely two months after opening, are the ones for which Vongerichten acts as a kind of curator of summer flavors.

Recent appetizers are inspired by the farmer's market. The heirloom tomatoes, paired with superior house-made mozzarella, were garnished with celery leaves and red-wine vinaigrette. There was a wonderful warm pickled peach with goat cheese on a frisée salad, and a savory dill broth over baby carrots and radishes. The forty-dollar starter of osetra caviar generously mounded over a slab of gently warmed hamachi was less local but still more a matter of careful placement than cooking.

The entrées involve greater effort from the kitchen, and the results are mixed. A bowl of fresh-squeezed cherry-tomato juice has a stunning flavor that nearly justifies the only passable piece of Arctic char that it accompanies. The rack of lamb has a velvet texture that contrasts nicely with a crust of chile-spiced bread crumbs. But the rabbit meat poached and packed into a cylinder coated in crispy *panko* is disconcertingly odd, and its flavors of Japanese citrus chili and a soybean purée only make it worse.

Vongerichten, who often pads around the dining room in a chef's coat over pin-striped suit pants and very supple-looking loafers, plans to change his menu with the seasons. It will be interesting to see what he does with winter's abundance of turnips. But he ought to start over with the dessert menu, which, aside from a perky combination of poached cherries with pistachios and pistachio ice cream, includes some dull chocolate pudding and a wan cheesecake with what taste like maraschino strawberries. One evening a diner on his way out whispered a warning, "Don't get the doughnuts!" (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $22-$38.)

—*Owen Phillips*

story is done. With Danny Huston and a mischievous Bill Nighy.—*A.L.* (9/5/05) (In wide release.)

**THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

**FOUR BROTHERS**

John Singleton directed this ensemble piece about four brothers out to avenge the death of their foster mother. It's an entertaining exercise in style: specifically, an urban Western, in which the spirit of Wyatt Earp hovers nearby as the men go about finding the killers. The movie is utterly preposterous—the script is cobbled together from "Oprah" moments and tough gangsta dramas—but there's plenty of gritty interplay between the brothers (played by Mark Wahlberg, Tyrese Gibson, Garrett Hedlund, and Outkast's Andre Benjamin) that's believable. Singleton moves the film along swiftly and unapologetically, creating a chaotic and graphic revenge drama that's almost purely visceral.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

**GRIZZLY MAN**

The indefatigable Werner Herzog has made a brilliant documentary about an American saint and fool—Timothy Treadwell, a failed actor and California surfer who fell in love with the grizzly bears in Alaska and who spent a dozen summers with the bears, usually alone and always unarmed. All was well until October, 2003, when Treadwell and his girlfriend, Amie Huguenard, were attacked and devoured by a hungry long-nosed grizzly. When the hundred hours of video footage that Treadwell shot in the last five years of his excursions fell into Herzog's hands, the German filmmaker interviewed Treadwell's friends and ex-girlfriends, naturalists, and park-service officers and wove the footage into a startling meditation on nature and innocence. Herzog is properly respectful of Treadwell, but he interprets the American as an impatient misfit who relieved his misanthropy with neurotic protestations of love in the wilderness. Treadwell doesn't seem to understand that death is at the center of any ecological balance, but Herzog, it turns out, sees nothing but death in nature. Neither man, it seems, is willing to admit that a bear is a bear is a bear.—*D.D.* (8/8 & 15/05) (In wide release.)

**JUNEBUG**

Meet the in-laws, North Carolina style. Phil Morrison's remarkably assured directorial début, about a cosmopolitan art dealer (Embeth Davidtz) who travels with her new husband (Alessandro Nivola) to his family home, is snarkily funny and unexpectedly moving. Set over a long weekend, the story (by Angus MacLachlan) focusses on the interaction between Davidtz's somewhat floundering character and the members of her husband's complex family. There's an unhurried attention to detail that Morrison brings to the story which allows the crisp dialogue and deep characterizations room to breathe. The various narrative strands—the domineering mother (Celia Weston) who favors one son over another, the chatterbox sister-in-law (a luminous Amy Adams) who hungers for connection—come together to form a contemplative picture of a surprisingly fragile Southern family.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

**KEANE**

Lodge Kerrigan's independent drama tracks, in relentless closeup, the attempts of a distraught man (Damian Lewis) to survive on the mean streets of New York and New Jersey and to form fresh bonds with a hard-bitten mother (Amy Ryan) he meets in a cheap motel. The red-haired Brit Damian Lewis (from the TV series "Band of Brothers") brings a sexual aggressiveness to the role that absolves the movie of mawkishness. What we see is harrowing and squalid but also exhilarating and tender.—*D.D.* (Sunshine Cinema.)

**THE MAJOR AND THE MINOR**

Determinedly sassy wartime comedy from 1942, in which Ginger Rogers, as a New York career girl down on her luck, without enough money to return home to Iowa, dresses up as a twelve-year-old and buys a half-fare railroad ticket. On the train, she meets Ray Milland, an Army major stationed at a military school for boys, and he is bewildered by his attraction to the overgrown tyke.

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Words on Music

**Borders' world music expert Chuck Hugener says:**
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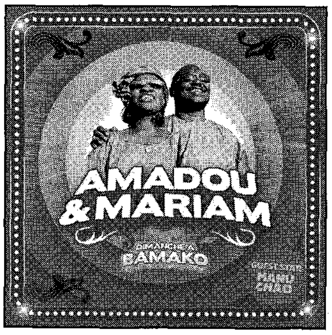

***Dimanche à Bamako,*** **Amadou and Mariam**'s collaboration with Franco-Spanish maverick **Manu Chao**, is the year's world music sensation in Europe and a Top 5 hit in France. A blind married couple whose life story is as remarkable as their music, the artists draw on the musical traditions of their homeland, while also embracing salsa, Cuban son, reggae, American R&B, and English blues-rock.

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***– Philadelphia Inquirer***

**"Every year there are one or two world music albums that become genuine crossover hits. This year, it's probably going to be *Dimanche à Bamako.*"**
***– The Independent, London***

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The major's fiancée (Rita Johnson) becomes suspicious, so the heroine is forced to keep up her charade, even while fending off lecherous youngsters at the school. The farce situations are pushed too broadly, and have a sanctimonious patriotic veneer, but this first American film directed by Billy Wilder was a box-office hit.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 10.)

**MARCH OF THE PENGUINS**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

**PRETTY PERSUASION**

Thin, nasty, and not always as funny as you want it to be, this satire of American values takes off from the mean-girls high-school genre and scores some points. The heroine, Kimberly Joyce (Evan Rachel Wood), a fifteen-year-old vamp with superfluous or missing parents (James Woods has some funny bits as her anti-Semitic dad), has streaks of perception and decency, but mainly she's a ruthless mover who wants celebrity and power. Wood, pert in a school uniform and pale with a bit of rose in her cheeks, does flip cynicism with such precise, easy rhythms and such obvious pleasure in naughtiness that she's impossible to dislike. The director, Marcos Siega, frames her performance within calm, formally composed images—no rapid movement, no weird angles or rushed cutting. "Pretty Persuasion" is often as still as a painting—one of its most profane scenes is lit and framed like an Old Master. The rest of the cast is negligible.—*D.D.* (8/29/05) (In wide release.)

**RED EYE**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

**SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS**

For several years, Tony Curtis had been a virtual guarantor of box-office success, and the New York locations for this film were invaded by thousands of teen-agers, who broke through police barricades to get to their idol. But these throngs ignored the completed picture, in which Curtis grew up into an actor and gave what will probably be remembered as the best performance of his career. Even the presence of that other box-office guarantor Burt Lancaster did not lift the picture from the red ink. This is understandable, because the movie is a slice of perversity—a study of dollar and power worship, with Lancaster as a Broadway gossip columnist and Curtis as an ingratiating, blackmailing press agent. Clifford Odets never came through more pungently as a screenwriter; his distinctively idiomatic dialogue generally seems like bad poetry when it's spoken from the screen, but here it's harshly expressive and taut. The director, Alexander Mackendrick, has a crisp film-noir style: the production is shaped by a zest for the corrupt milieu, the pulsating big-city life—the streets, the night clubs, the cynical types, the noise and desperation. His temperament enables us to respond to the vitality in this decadence. The weakest part is in the contrasting sweetness and light of the young lovers, Martin Milner and Susan Harrison. The melodrama is somewhat synthetic and is pitched very high, but the film has body and flavor; even Tony Curtis's name (Sidney Falco) stays with one—that, and the inflection he gives to "avidly." Released in 1957.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 9.)

**THREE DANCING SLAVES**

In this tough, understated working-class drama, three brothers struggle to survive in a ghetto housing block set in the midst of a natural lakeside paradise near the French Alps. Marc (Nicolas Cazalé), a drug addict, seeks revenge on brutal dealers; Christophe (Stéphane Rideau), just released from prison, tries to straighten himself out; and the youngest, Olivier (Thomas Dumerchez), looks for his own path amid conflicting loyalties. If the resolution, including a conventional gay coming-of-age story, spoils with sentiment the subtle touches that set it up, the director, Gaël Morel, nonetheless brings the characters' inner turbulence to life with a keen documentarylike attention to material detail. The actors are uniformly reserved, and the film, if not profound, has the ring of truth. In French.—*R.B.* (Angelika Film Center.)

**2046**

The latest and grandest work from Wong Kar-wai has the form of a sequel to "In the Mood for Love" but is also an amplification of its rhapsodic themes. Tony Leung plays Chow, a writer who moves into a small Hong Kong hotel, befriends the daughter of the owner (Faye Wong), and gradually works his way through a number of equally beautiful women, including a neighboring call girl (Zhang Ziyi) and a gambler with a black glove (Gong Li). "Her past was like the glove she always wore—a mystery," the narrator confides, and therein lies both the enchantment and the niggle of the film. Everything here is made mysterious under compulsion; the gorgeousness of the photography, like the ceaseless throb of the score, throws a veil over each detail, until not just the characters but the settings, too, begin to merge into one another. There are surges into science fiction (courtesy of a story that Chow is writing), but they seem no less anesthetized than the smoky world of his girlfriends. What they see in the guy is anybody's guess. In Cantonese, Japanese, and Mandarin.—*A.L.* (8/22/05) (In wide release.)

**AN UNFINISHED LIFE**

Lasse Hallström's gently directed new drama is well intentioned and watchable, but there's a warmed-over feeling about it that makes one's interest droop. It may be only a quirk of scheduling (this Miramax release has been on the shelf for a while), but the relationship between a gruff, elderly Robert Redford (a Wyoming ranch owner) and a rueful Morgan Freeman comes awfully close to the relationship between a gruff, elderly Clint Eastwood and a rueful Freeman in "Million Dollar Baby." Jennifer Lopez, giving a decent performance, turns up as Redford's daughter-in-law, whom he detests because he thinks she's responsible for the death of his son. There's also a big bear, and the theme is that you have to forgive both bears and yourself before you can forgive other people.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

**WEDDING CRASHERS**

Jeremy (Vince Vaughn) and John (Owen Wilson), a pair of divorce mediators, spend their summer weekends rolling up to the weddings of people they don't know and becoming the life and soul of the party. The director, David Dobkin, and the writers, Steve Faber and Bob Fisher, kick off with a hectic montage of good will, and the first twenty minutes are rabid with simple pleasure. Then Jeremy and John hit a swish society affair, in which the Treasury Secretary, William Cleary (Christopher Walken), is marrying off one of his daughters, leaving two more (Rachel McAdams and Isla Fisher) to be ogled by our heroes, whereupon the fizz—and the generosity—starts to leak away. Thank heaven for the leading men—especially Vaughn, a hopped-up Gary Cooper who shoots his mouth off with such scattershot brio that he flubs the occasional word, or picks an overheated one ("Erroneous! Erroneous!"), or forgets to pause for breath. This is a dumb-ass picture about dumb-ass men. Still, sometimes ten per cent of your brain is just enough.—*A.L.* (7/25/05) (In wide release.)

## *Also Playing*

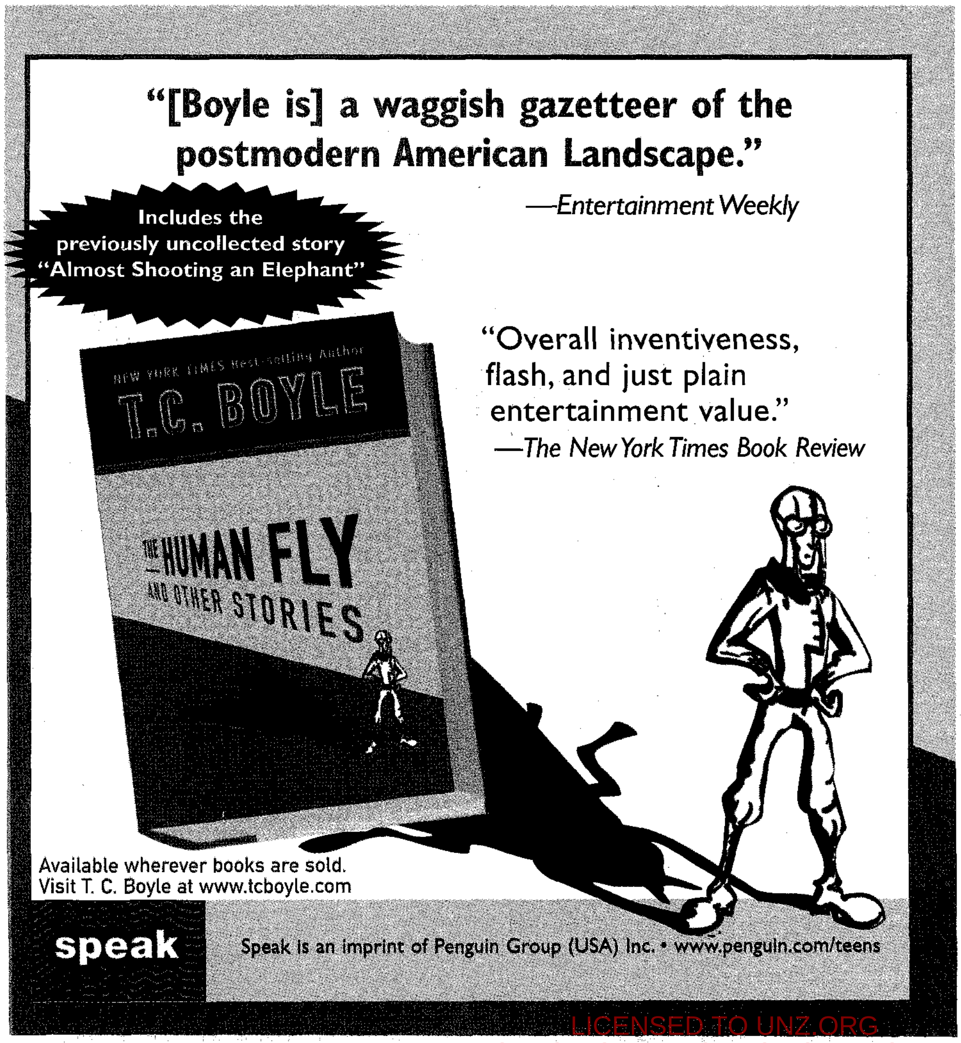
**GAMES OF LOVE AND CHANCE:** IFC Center. **MAD HOT BALLROOM:** In wide release. **MURDERBALL:** Sunshine Cinema. **REEL PARADISE:** IFC Center. **TRANSPORTER 2:** In wide release. **UNDERCLASSMAN:** In wide release. **WILLIAM EGGLESTON IN THE REAL WORLD:** Film Forum.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES**

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"New Filmmakers." Sept. 7 at 6: "Operation: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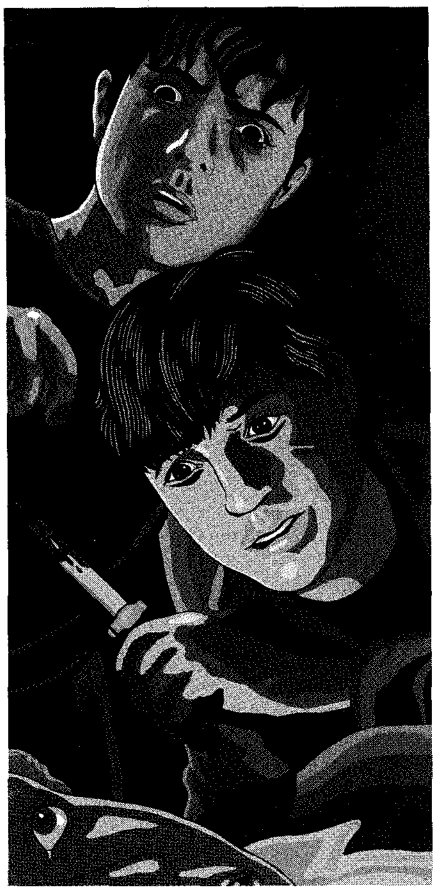


*Francis Ford Coppola's "The Outsiders—The Complete Novel" opens September 9.*

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

Ice Water" (2004, Josh Shaffer). ♦ Sept. 7 at 8:15: "Containment: Life After Three Mile Island" (2004, Chris Boebel and Nick Poppy). ♦ "A Tribute to Curtis Harrington." Sept. 8-13 at 7: "Usher" (2002). ♦ Sept. 8 and Sept. 12 at 9: "What's the Matter with Helen?" (1971). ♦ Sept. 9 at 9: "Games" (1967). ♦ Sept. 10 at 9: "Night Tide" (1961). ♦ Sept. 11 and Sept. 13 at 9: "The Killing Kind" (1973). ♦ Special screening. Sept. 11 at 4:30, 6:30, and 8:30: "Notre Musique" (2004, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

**BAM ROSE CINEMAS**
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—New York Korean Film Festival. All films are in Korean. Sept. 7 at 6:50: "The Big Swindle" (2004, Choi Dong-Hoon). ♦ Sept. 7 at 9:15: "Mapado: All About the Hemp & Widows" (2005, Chu Chang-Min). ♦ Sept. 8 at 6:50: "Ghost House" (2005, Kim Sang-Jin). ♦ Sept. 8 at 9:15: "Innocent Steps" (2005, Park Young-Hoon). ♦ Sept. 9 at 6:50: "The Mother, the Mermaid" (2004, Park Heung-Sik). ♦ Sept. 9 at 9:15: "Spider Forest" (2004, Song Il-Gon). ♦ Sept. 10 at 3: "Romance of Their Own" (2004, Kim Tae-Kyun). ♦ Sept. 10 at 6: "Another Public Enemy" (2005, Kang Woo-Suk). ♦ Sept. 10 at 9: "Bunshinsaba" (2004, Ahn Byeong-Ki). ♦ Sept. 11 at 3: "A Moment to Remember" (2004, Lee Jae-Han). ♦ Sept. 11 at 6: "My Brother" (2004, Ahn Kwon-Tae). ♦ Sept. 11 at 9: "Hypnotized" (2004, Kim In-Shik). ♦ Through Sept. 26: "Party Girls and Outlaws: Nicholas Ray." Sept. 12 at 6:50 and 9:15: "The True Story of Jesse James" (1957). ♦ Through Oct. 6: "Double Dutch." Sept. 13 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Brooklyn Stories" (2002, Jos de Putter) and "Nor His Donkey" (2000, de Putter; in Dutch, French, and English).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—"Summer Samurai." All films are in Japanese. Sept. 7 at 1, 5:10, and 9:10: "Samurai Assassin" (1965, Kihachi Okamoto). ♦ Sept. 7 at 3:20 and 7:30: "Zatoichi the Fugitive" (1963, Tokuzo Tanaka). ♦ Sept. 8 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Throne of Blood" (1957, Akira Kurosawa). ♦ Sept. 9-10 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Sword of Doom" (1966, Kihachi Okamoto). ♦ Sept. 11-12 at 1:30, 4:30, and 7:30: "Bandits vs. Samurai Squadron" (1978, Hideo Gosha). ♦ Sept. 13 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Samurai Saga" (1959, Hiroshi Inagaki).

**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Cinéma Tuesdays." Sept. 13 at 12:30, 4:30, and 8: "Céline and Julie Go Boating" (1974, Jacques Rivette; in French).

**IFC CENTER**
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Weekend Classics." Sept. 9-11 at noon: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Sept. 9-10: "Purple Rain" (1984, Albert Magnoli).

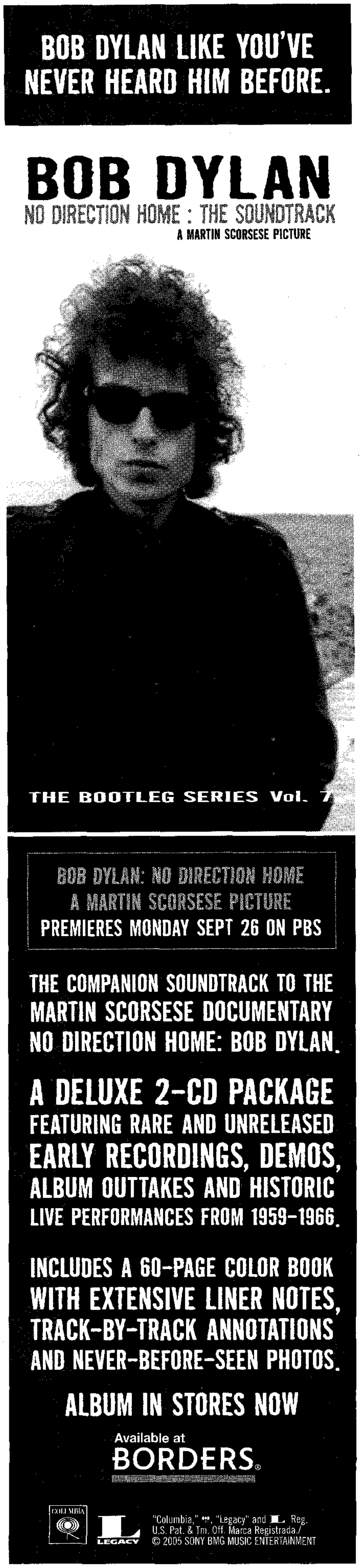
**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through Sept. 30: "Alexander Mackendrick: Auteur and Academic." Sept. 7 at 6: "The Man in the White Suit" (1951). ♦ Sept. 7 at 8 and Sept. 11 at 2: "Mandy," a.k.a. "Crash of Silence" (1952, Mackendrick and Fred F. Sears). ♦ Sept. 8 at 6 and Sept. 11 at 5: "The Maggie" (1954). ♦ Sept. 8 at 8 and Sept. 12 at 6: "The Ladykillers" (1955). ♦ Sept. 9 at 6:30: "Sweet Smell of Success" (†). ♦ Sept. 9 at 8:30 and Sept. 12 at 8: "Sammy Going South" (1963). ♦ Sept. 10 at 6: "A High Wind in Jamaica" (1965). ♦ Sept. 10 at 8:15: "Don't Make Waves" (1967). ♦ Special screening. Sept. 7 at 8:30 and Sept. 10 at 4:30: "The Flaming City" (1963, Dick Higgins). ♦ "112 Years of Cinema." Sept. 8 at 8:30: "Clueless" (1995, Amy Heckerling). ♦ Sept. 10 at 7: "China Gate" (1957, Samuel Fuller). ♦ Sept. 10 at 9: "The Hired Hand" (1971, Peter Fonda). ♦ Sept. 11 at 2: "The Gauntlet" (1977, Clint Eastwood). ♦ Sept. 11 at 5: "The Cooler" (2003, Wayne Kramer). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5:45: "Barcelona" (1994, Whit Stillman). ♦ "Anime!!" Sept. 9 at 8:30 and Sept. 10 at 2: "Mind Game" (2004, Masaaki Yuasa; in Japanese). ♦ Special première. Sept. 12 at 8: "The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo" (2005, Amy Stechler).

**MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Sept. 9 at 7:30: "I Am Cuba, the Siberian Mammoth" (2004, Vicente Ferraz; in Portuguese). ♦ Through Nov. 13: "Some Like It Wilder: The Complete Billy Wilder." Sept. 10 at 2: "The Major and the Minor" (†). ♦ Sept. 10-11 at 4: "Double Indemnity" (1944). ♦ Sept. 11 at 2: "The Bad Seed" (1934, Wilder and Alexander Esway; in French). ♦ Repertory nights. Sept. 10 at 7:30 and Sept. 11 at 6:30: "Persona" (1966, Ingmar Bergman).

**SUNSHINE CINEMA**
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. Sept. 9-10: "Army of Darkness" (1993, Sam Raimi).

**THALIA THEATRE**
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"Current Cinema." Sept. 11 at 5 and Sept. 13 at 9: "Me and You and Everyone We Know" (2005, Miranda July). ♦ "Thalia Film Classics." Sept. 11 at 7 and Sept. 13 at 6: "Ikiru" (1952, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Sept. 20: "Latinbeat 2005: Recent Films from Latin America." All films are in Spanish, except where noted. Sept. 7 at 1 and Sept. 8 at 7:15: "The Heart of Jesus" (2003, Marcos Loayza). ♦ Sept. 7 at 3, Sept. 9 at 9:30, and Sept. 11 at 9: "My Best Enemy" (2004, Alex Bowen). ♦ Sept. 8 at 1: "Step Forward" (2004, Elia K. Schneider). ♦ Sept. 8 at 3:15 and Sept. 11 at 4:15: "Buena Vida Delivery" (2004, Leonardo Di Cesare). ♦ Sept. 8 at 5:15 and Sept. 10 at 4: "The Immortal" (2005, Mercedes Moncada-Rodríguez). ♦ Sept. 8 at 9:15: "Bombon, the Dog" (2004, Carlos Sorin). ♦ Sept. 9 at 3:15 and Sept. 11 at 6:15: "Moon of Avellaneda" (2004, Juan José Campanella). ♦ Sept. 10



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at 9:30 and Sept. 13 at 2:45: "The King" (2004, Antonio Dorado). ♦ Sept. 13 at 4:45: "What Is It Worth?" (2005, Sergio Bianchi; in Portuguese). ♦ "Spotlight on Federico Luppi." Sept. 9 at 1 and 6:30: "Time of Revenge" (1981, Adolfo Aristarain). ♦ Sept. 10 at 1: "Martin" (1997, Aristarain). ♦ Sept. 10 at 6: "Men with Guns" (1997, John Sayles). ♦ Sept. 11 at 2:15 and Sept. 13 at 1: "Funny Dirty Little War" (1983, Héctor Olivera). ♦ Sept. 13 at 9: "The Devil's Backbone" (2001, Guillermo del Toro).

## READINGS AND TALKS

**NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
The longtime newspaper reporters Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn discuss their book, "102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive Inside the Twin Towers." (170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 212-485-9275. Sept. 8 at 6:30.)

**RICHARD HELL**
The downtown musician and punk avatar offers selections from his second novel, "Godlike," which is set in the East Village in the early seventies. (McNally Robinson Booksellers, 52 Prince St. No tickets necessary. Sept. 8 at 7.)

**"SUNDAYS AT SUNNY'S"**
The monthly Red Hook reading series turns to the City section of the *Times*. Its editor, Constance Rosenblum, will be joined by the contributors Ivor Hanson, Ernesto Quiñonez, and Steven Kurtz for what promises to be an afternoon of entertaining vignettes about life in the five boroughs. (253 Conover St., between Beard and Reed Sts. For more information, call 718-875-3677. Sept. 11 at 3.)

**JAPAN SOCIETY**
The museum inaugurates a series devoted to the work of prominent Japanese playwrights. The actors James Saito and Michi Barall read an English translation of "Chichi to Kuraseba" ("The Face of Jizo"), Hisashi Inoue's drama about a father and daughter in Hiroshima at the end of the Second World War. (333 E. 47th St. 212-752-3015. Sept. 12 at 7:30.)

**ARIEL LEVY**
Levy, a magazine journalist, reads from her newly published critique of contemporary womanhood, "Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture." (The Corner Bookstore, Madison Ave. at 93rd St. No tickets necessary. Sept. 13 at 6.)

**"POETRY IN THE PARK"**
The outdoor reading series continues with Eric Baus, Tracy K. Smith, and Aaron Smith. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. For more information, call 212-274-0343. Sept. 13 at 6:30.)

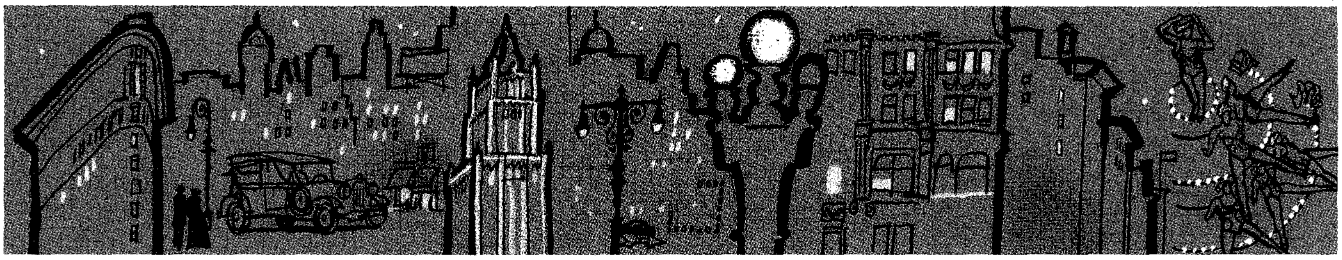
**WALTER MOSLEY**
The novelist reads from "Cinnamon Kiss," the latest in his Easy Rawlins detective series. (Hunter College Faculty Dining Room, West Building, Lexington Ave. at 68th St., 8th fl. For reservations, which are required, call 212-772-4007. Sept. 13 at 7:30.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**"WHAT COMES AFTER"**
This downtown festival, organized around the fourth anniversary of 9/11, focusses on how the arts can be instrumental in helping a city recover from a traumatic event. It features roundtable discussions, including an homage to Susan Sontag led by the poet and translator Richard Howard, art installations, walking tours, and presumably cathartic performances by the likes of the vocalist Diamanda Galás and the comedian Danny Hoch. (Sept. 8-11. For more information, visit www.lmcc.net.)

**ART PARADE**
More evidence of art's restorative powers will be on display when Ryan McGinness, Steve Powers, Julie Atlas Muz, and a slew of the city's most creative types march through SoHo along Grand Street from Crosby Street to Wooster Street. They'll be accompanied by floats, placards, and street performances. When they're done marching they'll engage in a good old-fashioned block party, with music provided by the Hungry March Band, the Scissor Sisters, and others. (Sept. 10, starting at 4. For more information, call 212-343-7300.)

**AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES**
**Christie's** saunters into the new season with one of its handy House Sales on Sept. 7-8, supplying a very serious George II gothic-style bookcase for the storing of leather-bound tomes, daybeds for the enjoyment of romance novels, and a silver-and-ivory reliquary or a Burmese bodhisattva for reflections on the divine. "A Lalique for Every Table" could be the title of the sale on Sept. 9, which features twentieth-century decorative arts, including a large collection of glass objects (vases, plates, boxes, and even "mascots" to personalize the hood of your car) by the French design house. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ The fall season begins quietly at **Sotheby's**, with an auction of Impressionist and modern art works on Sept. 13; Renoir's painting "Jeune Fille à la Charlotte" leads the sale. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)



LUCINDA ROGERS

## ON THE HORIZON

### DANCE
### WITH FEATHERS
*Sept. 19-24*

The corridors and stairwells of Dance Theatre Workshop will be lined with reeds during the world première of the local choreographer Jennifer Monson's new dance, "Flight of Mind." Monson's ongoing project, "Bird Brain," began with a study of the rooftop behaviors of New York City pigeons in 2000 and also includes investigations into the migratory patterns of ospreys, ducks, geese, and even gray whales. (212-924-0077.)

### THE THEATRE
### TOGETHER, FOREVER
*Oct. 4*

Max and Leo become Felix and Oscar, as Broadway's dynamic duo, Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick, follow up their "Producers" synergy with a revival of Neil Simon's "The Odd Couple," which is in previews before opening Oct. 27 at the Brooks Atkinson. (212-307-4100.)

### ART
### OSCAR SEASON
*Oct. 7-Feb. 12*

A retrospective of the work of the Prussian-born artist Oscar Bluemner (1867-1938) at the Whitney aims to reposition him as a major figure in the development of twentieth-century art. Subtitled "A Passion for Color," the show will include work spanning Bluemner's entire career, from his early architectural drawings to his late, color-saturated symbolic landscapes. (212-570-3676.)

### NIGHT LIFE
### PRODUCTION VALUES
*Oct. 7*

The superstar producer Daniel Lanois, noted for his work with U2, Bob Dylan, and Peter Gabriel, is also an acclaimed solo artist whose latest album is this year's "Belladonna"; he'll play at Irving Plaza with the Chicago post-rock icons Tortoise. (212-777-6800.)

### MOVIES
### CITY LIGHTS
*Oct. 15-16*

"Coney Island at Night" (1905) and "A Bronx Morning" (1931) are two of the silent short films capturing early-twentieth-century New York City that will screen at the Museum of the Moving Image, along with dozens of American avant-garde films from 1894 to 1941, by, among others, Edison and Busby Berkeley. (718-784-0077.)

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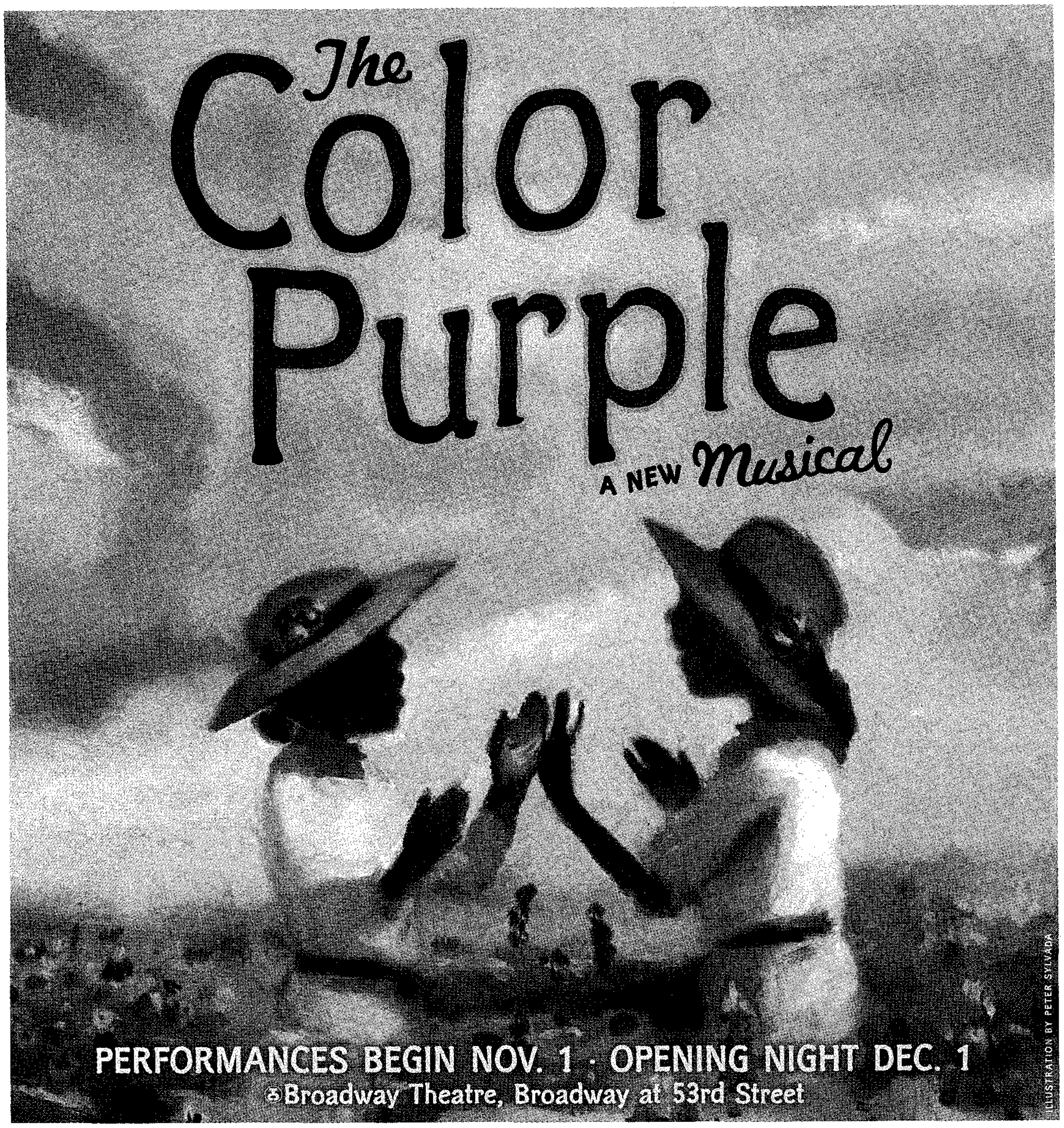
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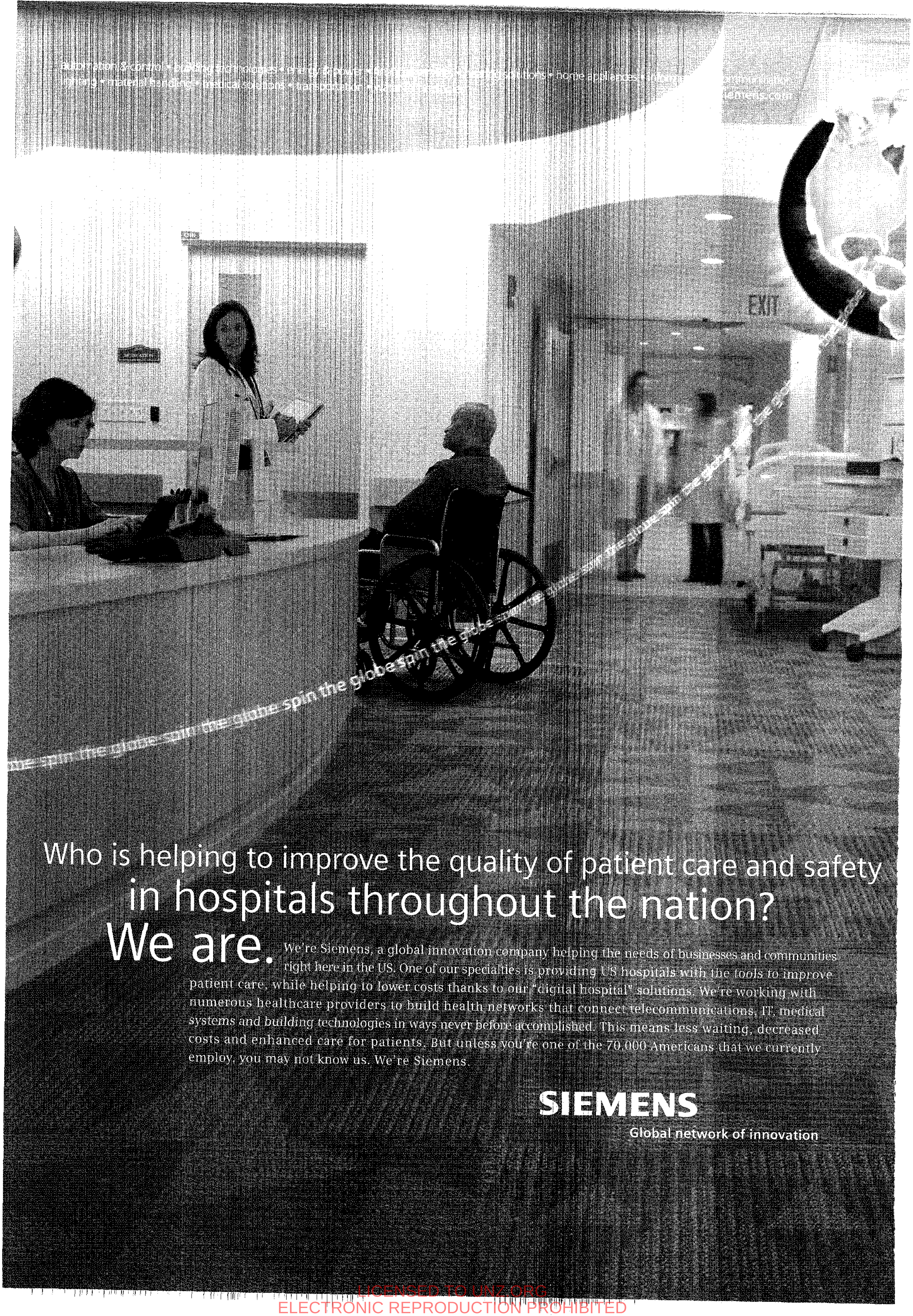
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THE NEW YORKER

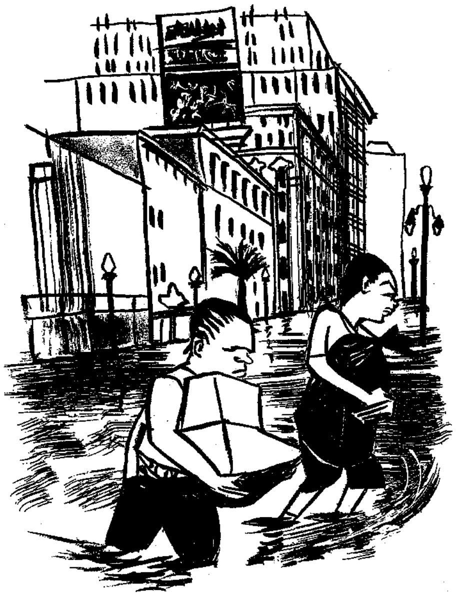
# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
## IN THE RUINS

New Orleans is an affront to nature, and nature isn't shy about reminding New Orleans of it. Lots of other places are affronts to nature, too, but, if they are in the United States, they usually have the hermetically sealed feeling of high-rise beachfront condominiums and desert suburbs and houses perched on mountaintops. New Orleans is too scruffy ever to achieve that. Tendrils of vines poke up through the floorboards. Paint flakes, wood rots, stamps self-adhere, and chunks of concrete must fly out of the roadbeds in the middle of the night (how else could they have disappeared?). The air is wet and heavy enough to slice into chunks and carry out of town in shopping bags. Streams lose their coherence and turn into swamps. Rats and roaches and snakes sashay through the gutters. Southern Louisiana is the site of many environmental depredations, but one of them will never be a feeling of locked-down sterility as an appurtenance of human habitation. Nature has the upper hand.

Natural disasters are always lurking somewhere close to the front of the New Orleans mind—especially aquatic disasters, and most especially hurricanes. Hurricanes are an eternal theme in the literature of New Orleans, for reasons having more to do with New Orleans than with literature. Lafcadio Hearn's story "Chita," about the famous hurricane of 1856, before hurricanes had official names, got down the rhythm that never changes: the palpable gathering of the storm, the largely unheeded advice to flee, the howling climax, the debris and the looting afterward. His description of the storm itself still works, too: "So the hurricane passed,—tearing off the heads of the prodigious waves, to hurl them a hundred feet in the air,—heaping up the ocean against the land,—upturning the woods. Bays and passes were swollen to abysses; rivers regorged; the sea-marshes were changed to raging wastes of water."

"Chita" was first published in 1888. Five years later, there was another devastating hurricane, which returned the barrier island next to the one described in "Chita" to the possession of the Gulf of Mexico. In the twentieth century, the highest-impact aquatic disaster was the Mississippi River flood of 1927 (the subject of a lovely 1939 novella, "Old Man," by William Faulkner), but New Orleans also got a direct hit from Hurricane Betsy, in 1965, and had many near-misses. The late-summer hurricane season entails an annual alteration of consciousness and a distinct set of rituals: laying in supplies, taping windows, deciding how much to trust official admonitions. It feels almost like a sacramental activity, consecrating the vulnerability that defines the place. But there's a peril in that, as is now obvious, when one year it's the farthest thing from just a ritual.



I like to tease my father, a New Orleanian, and a man whose idea of a good time would not include "dealing with his issues," that he has never fully explored the implications of having been sent away from his parents for six months, at the age of one, to live with relatives in Chicago in the pestilential aftermath of the 1927 flood. Maybe that explains why he prefers to spend hurricane season hunkered down at home. In 1965, I cowered happily in my parents' bed while Betsy beat against our windows. Three seasons ago, my stepmother persuaded my father to evacuate—unnecessarily, it turned out. This year, the two of them actually flew back to New Orleans from a vacation the night before Katrina hit, just when you were supposed to be getting out. On Monday afternoon, they were gloating;

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

on Tuesday, they formed a small caravan of neighbors, bearing arms, and managed to escape by car. So for my father evacuations—the first at the age of one, the other at a few months short of eighty—form a set of bookends for his life, which, like many New Orleanians, he has lived entirely in one neighborhood.

When, after Katrina passed, the levees broke and the pumps failed, another essential part of at least this New Orleanian's mind was activated: the part devoted to doubt about our competence to operate the purely human aspects of our society. New Orleans is, and for a long time has been, the opposite of a city that works. It perennially ranks near the bottom on practically every basic measure of civic health. It's true that the Bush Administration has repeatedly proposed cutting the budget of the Army Corps of Engineers, and that for years there has been a list of widely agreed-upon hurricane-protection measures that the federal government has chosen not to fund, with now horrific consequences. But it's also true that, after the levees broke, we watched every single system associated with the life of a city fail: the electric grid, the water system, the sewer system, the transportation system, the telephone system, the police force, the fire department, the hospitals, even the system for disposing of corpses. Perhaps it is all the fault of the force of the storm; I suspect that, as we move into the yearned-for realm of reliable information, we will find out that society and nature were co-conspirators in the tragedy. And the societal fault won't all have been the federal government's.

The wetlands that protected the city on the south and west have been deteriorating from commercial exploitation for years, thanks to inaction by Louisiana as well as by the United States. It isn't Washington that decided it's O.K. to let retail establishments in New Orleans sell firearms—which are now being extensively stolen and turned to the service of increasing the chaos in the city. It seems like a million years ago that President Bush had admirers who saw in him a Churchillian ability to rally a nation in crisis; last week, as both the President and Michael Brown, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, offered bland, undignified, and ill-timed restatements of the obvious about the direness of the situation, you could practically see them thinking, I'm not getting blamed for this! But they were positively helpful next to Louisiana's governor, who cried and said that we should all pray, and New Orleans' mayor, who told citizens they should evacuate but didn't say how, predicted a second major flood, which didn't materialize, sniped at the federal authorities, and kept reminding everyone that the situation was desperate.

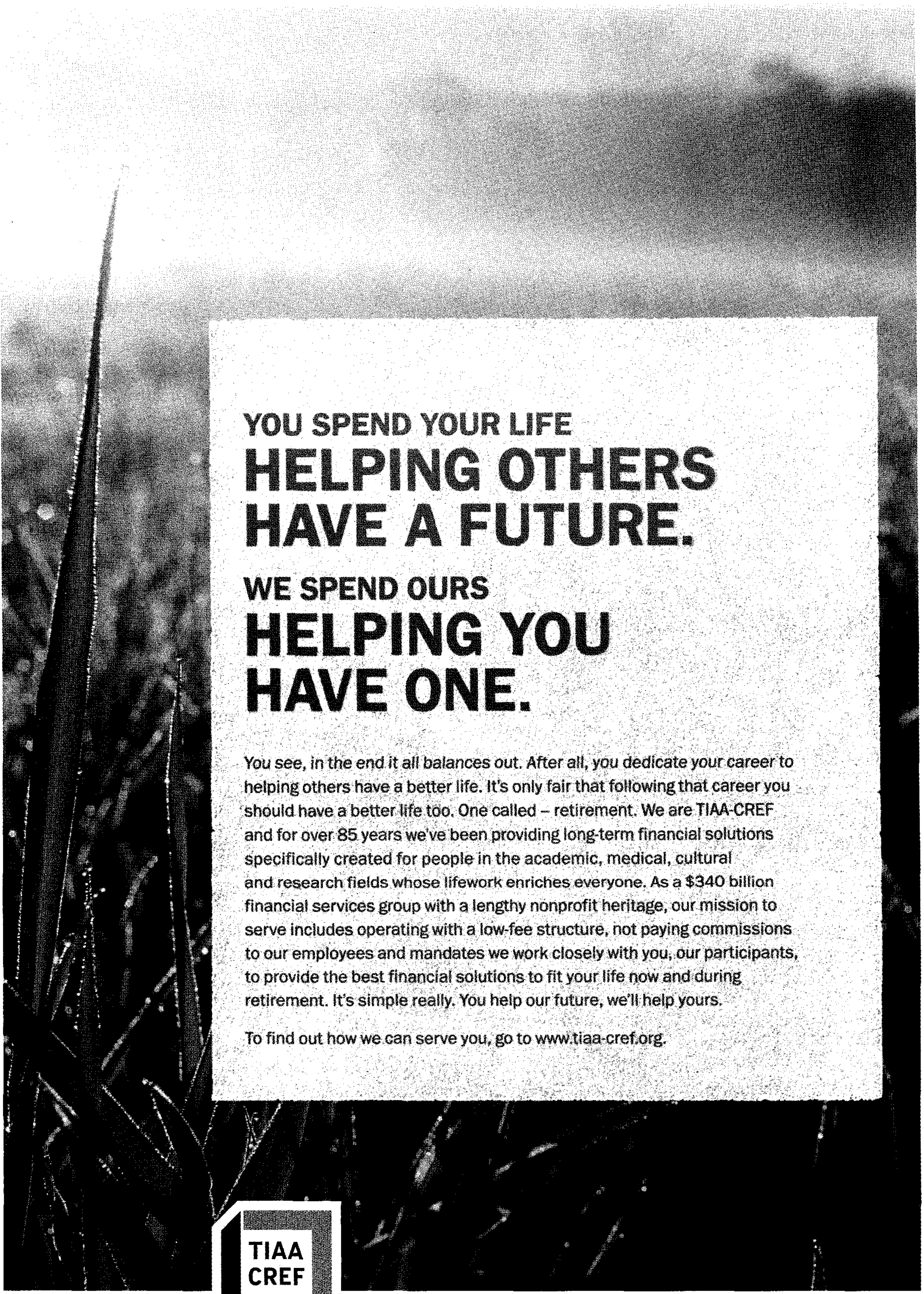
Because the feeling of a crisis fades so quickly, it's worth recalling that for the whole week of the hurricane most people in the city had no access to official help. The emergency numbers didn't work. There was no obvious person in charge, and no obvious plan being carried out. If you were lucky enough to have Internet access, you were more likely to find useful information—about, for example, which parts of the city were dry, or where drinking water was available—on blogs than on any government site. People who could find their way to institutional protection seemed almost worse off than people individually trapped, subjected as they were to violence, disease, starvation, overcrowding, and lies. It was unbelievable that it could take so long to get supplies in and people out, and to restore public safety, and to fix the levees. Even to have a person who could project calm and hope, and who could offer useful, reliable counsel would have been a gift from above—but that the emergence of such a person seemed so completely out of the question demonstrates an unimaginable failure at all levels. If national officials are incapable of rising to the occasion, the responsibility and duty of local officials goes beyond simply pointing that out.

## PSALM AT HIGH TIDE

Rain on the river's vinyl surface:
water that glitters,
water that hardly moves,
its branches witness to trees,
to fronds, leaves, crab floats, pilings,
shopping carts, appliances—
the divine earth takes everything
in its wounded side and gives back
wholeness.
It bears the huddled profane
and endures the soaking
venerated in its wild swirls—
this river fixed with wooden weirs,
radiant in misshapen glory.

*—Martha Serpas*

There is a final, even deeper recess of the New Orleans mind, where a constant awareness of the possibility of the breakdown of the social order resides. The televised scenes of civil collapse that have so horrified the country have registered with New Orleanians as the awful realization of an ever-present set of fears. It isn't just that New Orleans has one of the highest murder rates in the country; the city has repeatedly been the scene of armed conflict, most notably during Reconstruction and the governorship of Huey Long. Walker Percy's 1971 novel "Love in the Ruins," set on the Gulf Coast outside New Orleans, imagined a scene not too far from (though not nearly as bad as) what we've seen for the past week, with armed bands roaming the countryside, columns of smoke rising on the horizon, and people hiding out in half-destroyed buildings. Thirty years earlier, in a memoir called "Lanterns on the Levee," Percy's cousin William Alexander Percy proudly conjured up the echt-Bourbon picture of himself facing down unruly homeless African-Americans in the wake of the 1927 flood. The dramatic weather alone is not sufficient to explain the thinness of the veneer of civilization in the Gulf South. A society that doesn't deliver for its many poor peo-



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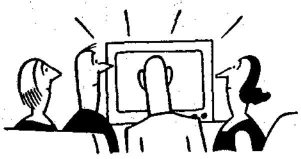
ple, most of whom are black, doesn't generate a lot of trust and cohesion. The Biblical weather events reveal a deep civic weakness that makes violence a constant possibility.

We're all wondering now what will become of New Orleans. A big American city has never before been entirely emptied of people, and had most of its housing rendered useless, and had all its basic systems fail at once. While the city is being cleared and drained and given an infrastructure, there will be no economic activity there at all. That will be the case for weeks (remember how devastating just a few days of inactivity in just a few industries and neighborhoods was after September 11th), so how will people live? How many will wait until they can move back and repossess their ruined homes and pray for the restoration of their jobs? Over the years, New Orleans has moved from being a top-ranked port toward becoming an economically optional city. Traditionally, it has had the kind of developing economy that runs on plantation agriculture, mineral extraction, and an intentionally impoverished, unempowered, and uneducated populace; its transformation into a tourist mecca was a form of going to ground, and it means that the city will be especially difficult to re-start. Every convention can always be held somewhere else. All one can do is hope that the city will be rebuilt with a much more solid social compact, as well as better hurricane protection.

You don't really think about the situation rationally at such an overwhelming time, of course. If it's home, elegiac competes with angry for emotional first place. With information so frustratingly scarce, you can scan the citizen posts on the Internet for a scrap of news about a familiar place, or find yourself thinking in peculiarly specific terms about an acquaintance's face, or a tree on a particular corner, or a long-ago meal in a place where, chances are, nobody will ever be able to go again. My family's conversations seesaw between the tragedy in its full dimension—how many dead and how much destroyed, and, worse, what proportion was needless—and the quotidian minor resonances that the mind can't help offering up. My oldest son called demanding to know what had become of a particular rock in Audubon Park where I used to perch him as a toddler. I've been preoccupied with our family burial plot in Metairie Cemetery, where we laid my mother to rest six summers ago. The suddenly famous Seventeenth Street Canal runs perilously nearby. I've always assumed that I would be buried there—but I guess not.

—*Nicholas Lemann*

## THE WHITE HOUSE UNDER WATER



One of the creepier vanities of most political leaders is the private yearning to be tested on a historical scale. Bill Clinton used to confide that, no matter what else he did as President, without a major war to fight he could never join the ranks of Lincoln and F.D.R. During the Presidential debates in 2000, George W. Bush informed his opponent, Al Gore, that natural catastrophes are "a time to test your mettle." Bush had seen his father falter after a hurricane in South Florida. But now he has done far worse. Over five days last week, from the onset of the hurricane on the Gulf Coast on Monday morning to his belated visit to the region on Friday, Bush's mettle was tested—and he failed in almost every respect.

Obviously, a hurricane is beyond human blame, and the political miscalculations that have come to light—the negligent planning, the delayed rescue and aid efforts, the thoroughly confused and uninspired political leadership—cannot all be laid at the feet of President Bush. But you could sense, watching him being interviewed by Diane Sawyer on ABC's "Good Morning America"—defensive, confused, overwhelmed—that he knew that he had delivered a series of feeble, vague, almost flippant speeches in the early days of the crisis, and that the only way to prevent further political damage was to inoculate himself with the inevitable call for non-partisanship: "I hope people don't play politics during this period of time."

And yet, to a frightening degree, Bush's faults of leadership and character were brought into high relief by the crisis. Suntanned and relaxed after a vacation so long that it would have shamed a French playboy, Bush reacted with fogged delinquency, as if he had been so lulled by his summer sojourn that he was not quite ready to acknowledge reality, let alone attempt to master it. His first view of the floods came, pitifully, theatrically, from the window of a low-flying Air Force One, and all the President could muster was, according to his press secretary, "It's devastating. It's got to be doubly devastating on the ground." The moment demanded clarity of mind and rigorous governance, and yet he could not summon them. The performance skills Bush eventually mustered after September 11th—in his bullhorn speech at Ground Zero, in his first speech to Congress—eluded him. The whole conceit of his Presidency, that he was an instinctive chief executive backed by "grownups" like Dick Cheney and tactical wizards like Karl Rove, now seemed as water-logged as Biloxi and New Orleans. The mismanagement of the Katrina floods echoed the White House mismanagement—the cavalier posture, the wretched decisions, the self-delusions—in postwar Iraq.

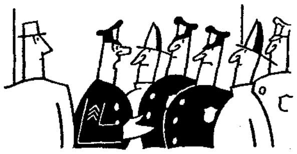
Just as serious, the President's priorities, his indifference to questions of infrastructure and the environment, magnified an already complicated disaster. In an era of tax cuts for the wealthy, Bush consistently slashed the Army Corps of Engineers' funding requests to improve the levees holding back Lake Pontchartrain. This year, he asked for $3.9 million, $23 million less than the Corps requested. In the end, Bush reluctantly agreed to $5.7 million, delaying seven contracts, including one to enlarge the New Orleans levees. Former Republican congressman Michael Parker was forced out as the head of the Corps by Bush in 2002 when he dared to protest the lack of proper funding.

Similarly, the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project, which is supposed to improve drainage and pumping systems in the New Orleans area, recently asked for $62.5 million; the White House proposed $10.5 million. Former Louisiana Senator John Breaux, a pro-Bush Democrat, said, "All of us said, 'Look, build it or you're going to have all of Jefferson Parish under water.' And they didn't, and now all of Jefferson Parish is under water."

The President's incuriosity, his prideful insistence on being an underbriefed "gut player," is not looking so charming right now, either, if it ever did. In the ABC interview, he said, “I don’t think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees.” Even the most cursory review shows that there have been comprehensive and chilling warnings of a potential calamity on the Gulf Coast for years. The most telling, but hardly the only, example was a five-part series in 2002 by John McQuaid and Mark Schleifstein in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, a newspaper that heroically kept publishing on the Internet last week. After evaluating the city’s structural deficiencies, the *Times-Picayune* reporters concluded that a catastrophe was “a matter of when, not if.” The same paper said last year, “For the first time in 37 years, federal budget cuts have all but stopped major work on the New Orleans area’s east bank hurricane levees, a complex network of concrete walls, metal gates and giant earthen berms that won’t be finished for at least another decade.” A Category 4 or 5 hurricane would be a catastrophe: “Soon the geographical ‘bowl’ of the Crescent City would fill up with the waters of the lake, leaving those unable to evacuate with little option but to cluster on rooftops—terrain they would have to share with hungry rats, fire ants, nutria, snakes, and perhaps alligators. The water itself would become a festering stew of sewage, gasoline, refinery chemicals, and debris.” And that describes much of the Gulf Coast today.

—*David Remnick*

## REPORT FROM CARROLLTON
## PORCH DUTY



From the front porch of his rather grand house on South Carrollton Avenue—which had suddenly become Pontchartrain lakefront, even if the lake here was a foot deep and toxic—the world looked pretty damned stupid to H. J. (Pepper) Bosworth, Jr., last Thursday. Not so much the lack of electricity in the ninety-degree torpor, or even the desultory procession of loot-laden shopping carts that passed, grim parodies of Mardi Gras parades. No, what seemed dumb, plain bad science, was all that talk that New Orleans needed to be evacuated because a storm surge could have put all of it, even the relatively elevated French Quarter, under twenty feet of water.

“That’s just lies,” Bosworth said, shifting a heavy Ruger pistol in his lap and sloshing the beer around in his cup. Bosworth, who is forty-seven, claims to know what he’s talking about. He’s the engineer who designed drainage for the new P.G.A. golf course near New Orleans. The way water moves over land is his specialty, so even when the levees burst last Monday he didn’t budge, because he knew the waters of Lake Pontchartrain, six miles away, wouldn’t rise any higher than his curbstones.

The other reason he didn’t move is the looters, whom Bosworth followed with his eyes as they trudged along the raised streetcar median to and from the burst Rite Aid drugstore three blocks away. Neither Bosworth, nor his girlfriend, nor the couple next door had slept properly for days; somebody was always on one porch or the other, with either the twelve-gauge pump gun or the 8-mm. Mauser rifle, and either the Ruger or the Glock pistol. By this point, they could tell the looters from ordinary refugees. “New shirt,” Barbara Ann Locklear, Bosworth’s coppery, part-Indian girlfriend, said as one young man in a gleaming blue dress shirt struggled his bundle along. “Hey!” the man yelled, and Bosworth’s hand moved toward his gun. “Hey! Y’all want some Crown Royal?” he held up a purple velvet bag. “No, thank you!” Locklear yelled with the forced good cheer of a flight attendant on a crashing plane, but the man kept approaching across the median. “Just leave it right there!” Locklear shouted. “You don’t want to step in that water!” The man looked down drunkenly, past his drenched pants and flip-flops, to the rusty water in the street. Then he looked up and smiled. “All right,” he said softly, setting the bag on the grass. “All right.” He moved along, well watched.

“As I was saying,” Bosworth said. “Lake Pontchartrain is twelve feet deep; that’s all. The levee that divides it from the city is on average eighteen feet high. Even a twenty-two-foot storm surge would have put four feet of water over the levee, which, given the size of the city, would have made people’s feet wet.” It was a scandal that the levees ruptured, Bosworth went on. But that doesn’t change the fact that everybody who left was going to have to come home to storm damage and, of course, to the ravages of looters. “We decided to endure a relatively short period of discomfort, protect the house, rather than face a year of dealing with Lord knows what,” Bosworth said.

Chris Wormuth, from next door, kept fidgeting with his riot gun. Wormuth, an emergency-room physician, had been idled by a lack of serviceable generators at Oschner Clinic. He’d just returned from a run to Lafayette, where he’d bought six small gasoline generators—enough to preserve the temperature of his hundred-thousand-dollar wine collection, but not enough for air-conditioning. After several fitful, steamy nights, Wormuth was developing the panda look of the grievously sleep-deprived. “The problem with New Orleans? Two blocks away from here there are people living hand to mouth,” he said. “I don’t know of another city where, if you’re in a two-million-dollar house, you’re not sure that everything around you for two miles is a two-million-dollar house.” He pointed at the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Elementary School, two doors down. “That’s now a hotel for looters,” he said. “They’re in there all night, partying.”

Suddenly, the cavalry arrived, in the form of ten twinkling and whooping cars from the Sheriff’s Office in Baton Rouge, eighty miles away. They were towing sleek bass boats on trailers, and were stuffed with heavily armed men in Kevlar helmets and bulletproof vests. Everybody on the two porches stood and cheered as the cars swished past in great filthy roostertails of lake water. Alas, the Baton Rouge deputies had come not to protect South Carrollton Avenue but to look after their own. "People in Baton Rouge call to tell us their mother is alone at such-and-such an address and we promise to come get her," Colonel Greg Phares said as the deputies unlimbered the boats. "No other law-enforcement or government agency has any idea we're here. We're on our own. There is absolutely no command-and-control."

Lots of people from the neighborhood—a white-haired lady on a Sting-Ray bicycle, an elderly couple dressed for a cotillion, and many young black men clutching bundles of Rite Aid booty—gathered to watch. As a finale, the Baton Rouge deputies raided the school—blasting open the door with a bomb, shooting off internal locks with their M-4s, lighting up the windows with flash-boom concussion grenades. For twenty minutes, the street echoed with shots, blasts, and sledgehammer blows. The deputies didn't find any looters, but they did recover a pair of what appeared to be stolen pants and evidence that the school had served, if not as a looters' hotel, at least as a looters' latrine.

When it was all over, a tall, thin man came loping along the median, his biceps gleaming against his sleeveless white T-shirt. He was carrying an empty trash basket toward the Rite Aid. "That's the leader," Locklear whispered. A few minutes later, he was back. "I got bread!" he called to the people on the porch. "Y'all need bread? I got bread!"

*—Dan Baum*

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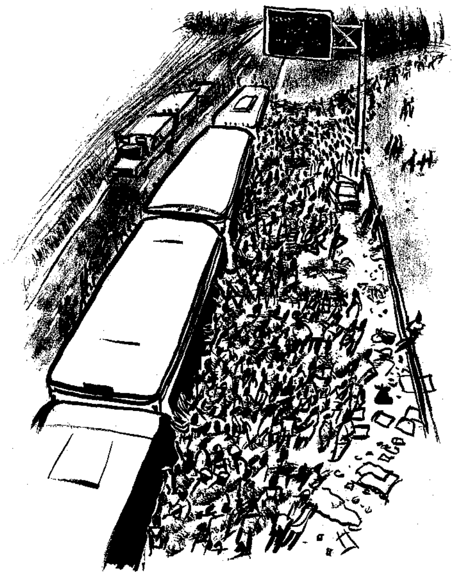
## ARCHIVES
## THE SUNKEN CITY

(*From "The Control of Nature: Atchafalaya," which ran in the issue of February 23, 1987. The complete article is available at www.newyorker.com.*)

New Orleans, surrounded by levees, is emplaced between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi like a broad shallow bowl. Nowhere is New Orleans higher than the river's natural bank. Underprivileged people live in the lower elevations, and always have. The rich—by the river—occupy the highest ground. In New Orleans, income and elevation can be correlated on a literally sliding scale: the Garden District on the highest level, Stanley Kowalski in the swamp. The Garden District and its environs are locally known as uptown.



Torrential rains fall on New Orleans—enough to cause flash floods inside the municipal walls. The water has nowhere to go. Left on its own, it would form a lake, rising inexorably from one level of the economy to the next. So it has to be pumped out. Every drop of rain that falls on New Orleans evaporates or is pumped out. Its removal lowers the water table and accelerates the city's subsidence. Where marshes have been drained to create tracts for new housing, ground will shrink, too. People buy landfill to keep up with the Joneses. In the words of Bob Fairless, of the New Orleans District engineers, "It's almost an annual spring ritual to get a load of dirt and fill in the low spots on your lawn." A child jumping up and down on such a lawn can cause the earth to move under another child, on the far side of the lawn.

Many houses are built on slabs that firmly rest on pilings. As the turf around a house gradually subsides, the slab seems to rise. Where the driveway was once flush with the floor of the carport, a bump appears. The front walk sags like a hammock. The sidewalk sags. The bump up to the carport, growing, becomes high enough to knock the front wheels out of alignment. Sakrete appears, like putty beside a windowpane, to ease the bump. The property sinks another foot. The house stays where it is, on its slab and pilings. A ramp is built to get the car into the carport. The ramp rises three feet. But the yard, before long, has subsided four. The carport becomes a porch, with hanging plants and steep wooden steps. A carport that is not firmly anchored may dangle from the side of a house like a third of a drop-leaf table. Under the house, daylight appears. You can see under the slab and out the other side. More landfill or more concrete is packed around the edges to hide the ugly scene. A gas main, broken by the settling earth, leaks below the slab. The sealed cavity fills with gas. The house blows sky high.

"The people cannot have wells, and so they take rain-water," Mark Twain observed in the eighteen-eighties. "Neither can they conveniently have cellars or graves, the town being built upon 'made' ground; so they do without both, and few of the living complain, and none of the others." The others may not complain, but they sometimes leave. New Orleans is not a place for interment. In all its major cemeteries, the clients lie aboveground. In the intramural flash floods, coffins go out of their crypts and take off down the street.

The water in New Orleans' natural aquifer is modest in amount and even less appealing than the water in the river. The city consumes the effluent of nearly half of America, and, more immediately, of the American Ruhr. None of these matters withstanding, in 1984 New Orleans took first place in the annual Drinking Water Taste Test Challenge of the American Water Works Association.

The river goes through New Orleans like an elevated highway. Jackson Square, in the French Quarter, is on high ground with respect to the rest of New Orleans, but even from the benches of Jackson Square one looks up across the levee at the hulls of passing ships. Their keels are higher than the AstroTurf in the Superdome, and if somehow the ships could turn and move at river level into the city and into the stadium they would hover above the playing field like blimps.

In the early nineteen-eighties, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a new large district headquarters in New Orleans. It is a tetragon, several stories high, and it is right beside the river. Its foundation was dug in the mainline levee. That, to a fare-thee-well, is putting your money where your mouth is.

Among the five hundred miles of levee deficiencies now calling for attention along the Mississippi River, the most serious happen to be in New Orleans. Among other factors, the freeboard—the amount of levee that reaches above flood levels—has to be higher in New Orleans to combat the waves of ships. Elsewhere, the deficiencies are averaging between one and two feet with respect to the computed high-water flow line, which goes on rising as runoffs continue to speed up and waters are increasingly confined. Not only is the water higher. The levees tend to sink as well. They press down on the mucks beneath them and squirt materials out to the sides. Their crowns have to be built up. "You put five feet on and three feet sink," a Corps engineer remarked to me one day. This is especially true of the levees that frame the Atchafalaya swamp, so the Corps has given up trying to fight the subsidence there with earth movers alone, and has built concrete floodwalls along the tops of the levees, causing the largest river swamp in North America to appear to be the world's largest prison. It keeps in not only water, of course, but silt. Gradually, the swamp elevations are building up. The people of Acadiana say that the swamp would be the safest place in which to seek refuge in a major flood, because the swamp is higher than the land outside the levees.

As sediments slide down the continental slope and the river is prevented from building a proper lobe—as the delta plain subsides and is not replenished—erosion eats into the coastal marshes, and quantities of Louisiana steadily disappear. The net loss is over fifty square miles a year. In a hundred years, Louisiana as a whole has decreased by a million acres. Plaquemines Parish is coming to pieces like old rotted cloth. A hundred years hence, there will in all likelihood be no Plaquemines Parish, no Terrebonne Parish. Such losses are being accelerated by access canals to the sites of oil and gas wells. There are in Louisiana ten thousand miles of canals. In the nineteen-fifties, after Louisiana had been made nervous by the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Corps of Engineers built the Mississippi River–Gulf Outlet, a shipping canal that saves forty miles by traversing marsh country straight from New Orleans to the Gulf. The canal is known as Mr. Go, and shipping has largely ignored it. Mr. Go, having eroded laterally for twenty-five years, is as much as three times its original width. It has devastated twenty-four thousand acres of wetlands, replacing them with open water. A mile of marsh will reduce a coastal-storm-surge wave by about one inch. Where fifty miles of marsh are gone, fifty inches of additional water will inevitably surge. The Corps has been obliged to deal with this fact by completing the ring of levees around New Orleans, thus creating New Avignon, a walled medieval city accessed by an interstate that jumps over the walls.

"The coast is sinking out of sight," Oliver Houck has said. "We've reversed Mother Nature." Hurricanes greatly advance the coastal erosion process, tearing up landscape made weak by the confinement of the river. The threat of destruction from the south is even greater than the threat from the north.

—*John McPhee*

## CENTER CITY ON THE ROOF

The two families shared a one-story house on South Prieur Street with one good job among them. Thirteen-year-old Timesha Johnson and twelve-year-old Irelle Guidry might have been sisters, with their identically red-tipped cornrows and denim miniskirts. When the city of New Orleans ordered them to evacuate, they gladly would have gone. "I'm poor, but I'm not stupid," said Timesha's stepfather, Charles Covington, a roofer, who wears his own hair in short, blond-tipped dreadlocks. But none of them own a car, and their friends who do had no room for extra passengers. There was a rumor of buses, but none appeared. "We even called cabs, but they was all getting out themselves," Charles said. So they bought what food and water they could, and the eight of them, from Irelle's grandmother, Janet, down to Timesha's eleven-month-old sister, Alleiah, huddled up together in the living room.

The house, in which Janet was born, creaked and banged and sighed as the winds blew, but it held together as it always had. Then it was over. That wasn't so bad, they said. Not as bad as Camille. Not as bad as Betsy. It was only when they pried off the plywood that they realized that their ordeal had just begun.

The water rose so fast that they barely had time to snatch up some food and clothing before it got soaked. First they sat on tables. Then they sat on dressers. Then they pushed Janet and her obese thirty-three-year-old son, Mario, up through the hatch to the stifling attic and climbed in. Luckily, Charles thought to grab a heavy hammer from his tool belt, because it wasn't long before the water was bubbling through the cracks in the attic floor. They sat on boxes, then stood, and still it rose, pushing them against the exposed points of roofing nails. Charles began banging at the ceiling with the hammer and finally bashed a hole big enough for them to squeeze through. Then they were sitting, exposed, on the sloping, sticky, hot tar roof, expecting to be rescued. That was Tuesday morning.

They sat like that, in the hot sun, eating Pop-Tarts, Rice Krispies Treats, and two-foot-long Slim Jims. They gave most of the water to Tasha Johnson, so she could nurse Alleiah. They took turns holding up shirts as sunshades to protect the baby and Janet, who cannot walk, from heatstroke. Helicopters buzzed in the distance. The sun went down. They heard shooting and mayhem, but none of it came near. Night, though scary, was at least a reprieve from the sun, which returned on Wednesday with malice. Every now and then, a boat crossed a nearby intersection, and they'd shout, but they couldn't make themselves heard. At around midday, a passing helicopter swerved toward them and hovered, its rotor wash making a frightening maelstrom of loosened pieces of roof. A basket dangled from the helicopter, but a tangle of power lines kept it from getting low enough. Finally, the great whining machine veered away, the crewman at the door gesturing as if to say they'd come back.

Wednesday went by in a blur. Thursday brought some clouds, and a little cooling rain, but no more helicopters. At last, on Friday, a friend paddled by in a small aluminum boat, and they all piled wobblingly aboard. By noon they were sitting amid a vast field of trash at the once stylish corner of Napoleon and St. Charles, waiting for buses out that had been promised by the police. They all had rashes on their arms and legs, from the hot tar. Janet, who is fifty-two but looks seventy-two, slumped in a wheelchair they'd found in the water. "I had a wineglass I really liked," she moaned through a mouth sagging with few teeth. "Even that's gone." Behind her stood Mario, so exhausted his heavy face seemed to be melting. "We're O.K., we're O.K.," he kept whispering to himself, eyes closed. "We're O.K. We're O.K."

If the buses came, they said, they were going to try to call relatives in Irving, Texas, for money and bus tickets. "One eight hundred C-A-L-L-A-T-T," chanted Timesha, who cradled the baby in her arms. "That's how you make a collect call."

The others sat on a set of beautifully carved dining-room chairs that might have come from any of a thousand graceful houses in the neighborhood. "I'll have plenty of work," Charles, the roofer, said, "if I ever come back here."

*—Dan Baum*

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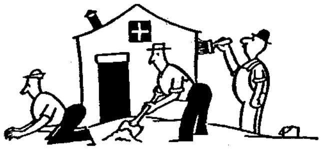
## UPTOWN
## HOME ALONE



We finished boarding up the house on Sunday, the day before the expected hit, and my husband, Joe, prepared the attic with tarps and Visqueen in the hope of directing water leaks through the old slate roof into a copper cistern that hasn't had any use for close to a century. Our neighbors had left earlier in the day, their cars packed with kids, pets, photographs, and possessions that, at the next junction in life, might well look like junk.

The wind began in earnest that evening, gusts that blew off roof tiles and ripped branches from our neighbor's oak. We settled in, alert but calm, in that way that belies anxiety. During the night, the awning on the windows of the sunroom tried to get airborne and take the second story with it. We jumped out of bed, ready to take action, only to find nothing to do. Through the back glass doors, we could see the rain driving horizontally.

The phone rang, and we both laughed; we were shocked that it worked. It was a neighbor who is a reporter at the *Times-Picayune*. He said, "I'm stuck. The building is surrounded." He meant by water. He wanted to know if the neighborhood was flooded. "Not a sign of standing water," we told him. "But our crape-myrtle tree just blew out of the ground."

"Anything else happening?"

"The cat won't come in," I told him. "She's on the front porch, pulling a Walter Anderson act." Anderson, the Mississippi artist, used to lash himself to a tree out on Horn Island, in the Gulf of Mexico, to observe the storms so he could paint them.

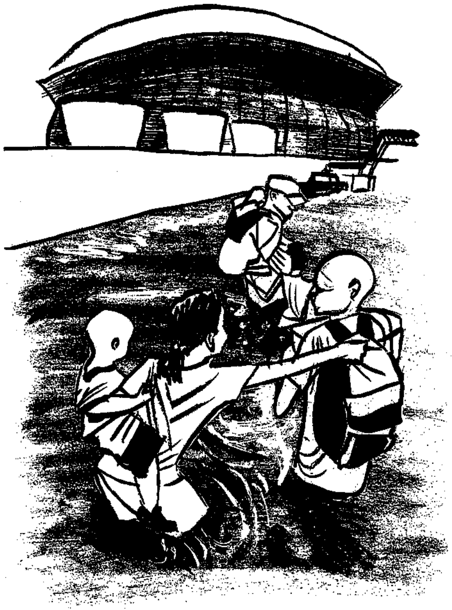
The electricity had been out since before dawn. We turned on the radio and listened to WWL. The usual talk show was in progress, a city official taking calls. "What should we do when it's over?" one caller asked.

"The first thing I have to say about that," the city father pronounced, "is to ask you, why are you still here?" With an edge of sarcasm, the caller asked if she should leave now. "No! No!" the official yelled. "I cannot emphasize strongly enough that everyone should stay where they are. Do not move around the city. Trees are falling, lines are down—" We decided to save the batteries.

At about three o'clock, the storm was past us, and we ventured out. Roof slate surrounded the house, which otherwise had weathered it all. Split trees blocked the street. A utility pole leaned on a magnolia tree, the phone lines stretched taut to the house. The air felt heavy, substantial. As far as we could tell, we were the only people around for blocks.

A few minutes later, a car picked its way through the tree debris. It was two neighbors returning from the downtown hotel they'd checked in to—no power, no food, and a fourteenth-floor room. We had a pleasant dinner together that night. After being closed into our houses away from the heat all summer, with the air-conditioner compressors creating white noise, we heard frogs and cicadas that seemed as if they had jumped into the future from our childhoods. We sipped our wine and listened and began trading stories of our lives. We turned on the radio and heard a general call to anyone with a flat boat to go out to the suburb of Metairie to help rescue people from rooftops. Relief workers were pushing bodies out of the way to save those still alive. The guilt of survivors passed through us; we didn't know anything about tragedy.

The next day, more reality came unbidden. The phone line no longer worked. The radio told us that the water supply was now contaminated. We had enough food left for three days. We went over a few blocks to visit another diehard, a man with a generator, and he said that the local stores were being looted. We knew the houses would be next. As we walked home, we saw a gang wearing gray hooded sweatshirts, in spite of the heat, their hands hidden in their pockets, eying our car. Joe headed toward it, and they moved off down the street.



We went back into the house, neither of us saying a word. Joe went upstairs, I stayed down. About an hour later, we met on the landing. "We have to go," Joe said. "I know," I told him. I'd already packed the things I would need from my office. We locked up halfheartedly. The radio reported looters with AK-47s roaming the streets. Officials cancelled their request for flat-boat owners; they were being shot at on their search-and-rescue missions.

On the way out of town, we saw a man boarding up his house for the second time. "I took it all down," he said. "I thought it was over."

*—Christine Wiltz*

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### ANNALS OF LAW

# SWING SHIFT

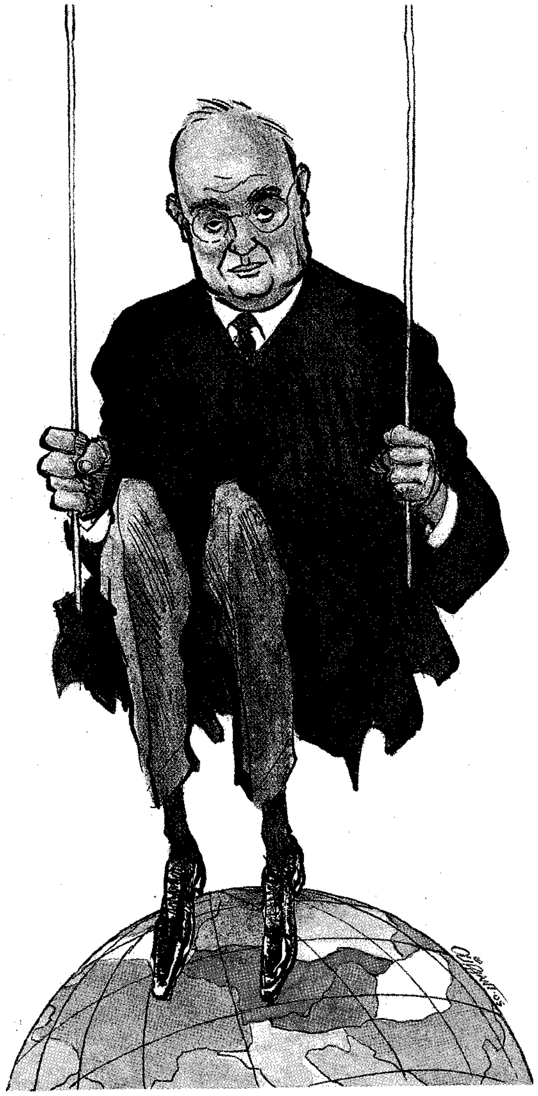
*How Anthony Kennedy's passion for foreign law could change the Supreme Court.*

### BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

Few Justices in recent history have arrived at the Supreme Court from a more provincial background than Anthony Kennedy. Before he moved to Washington, seventeen years ago, his professional life had been spent almost entirely in Sacramento. He was born there in 1936, and when his father, a lawyer who had his own practice, died two years after Kennedy graduated from Harvard Law School, he returned home to take over the family business. When President Reagan nominated him to the Supreme Court, in 1987, Kennedy was fifty-one years old and still lived in the house where he grew up.

His inclinations were hardly those of an insular man, however. While Kennedy was a teen-ager, his uncle, an oil driller, hired him to work summers on rigs in Canada and Louisiana. Before he graduated from college, he spent several months studying at the London School of Economics, where he was struck by the range of student opinion and the vehemence of political debate. "At the political union, you had to sit in the room according to your place on the ideological spectrum, and, to give you an idea of what it was like, the Communists—the Communists!—were in the middle," Kennedy recalled recently. "It was a different world, and I loved it." As an attorney in private practice, he maintained his father's ties with California's Republican Party; in 1973, he volunteered to draft a tax-cutting referendum for Governor Reagan, which lost at the polls. At the same time, he obtained a license to practice law in Mexico and helped a client establish one of the first *maquiladoras*—American-owned factories—there. While serving as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in the late nineteen-seventies, he accepted an appointment from Chief Justice Warren Burger as supervisor of the territorial courts in the South Pacific, which entailed travelling to Guam, Palau, Saipan, American Samoa, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

In fact, Kennedy has a passion for foreign cultures and ideas, and, as a Justice, he has turned it into a principle of jurisprudence. Over the past two years, he has become a leading proponent of one of the most cosmopolitan, and controversial, trends in constitutional law: using foreign and international law as an aid to interpreting the United States Constitution. Kennedy's embrace of foreign law may be among the most significant developments on the Court in recent years—the single biggest factor behind his evolution from a reliable conservative into the likely successor to Sandra Day O'Connor as the Court's swing vote. Kennedy continues to oppose racial preferences and to argue for expansive Presidential powers. He was a principal author of the unsigned majority opinion in Bush v. Gore. But he also wrote the two most important pro-gay-rights decisions in the Court's history and has at least tentatively affirmed his support for Roe v. Wade. Conservatives regard these decisions as a betrayal. In 2003, James Dobson, the founder and director of the influential evangelical group Focus on the Family, called Kennedy "the most dangerous man in America."



*Kennedy's position on Roe v. Wade ultimately may surprise supporters of abortion rights..*

PAT OLIPHANT

The United States Supreme Court has made references to foreign law since the earliest days of the Republic. During the tenure of Chief Justice John Marshall, the Court was often called on to interpret treaties and weigh controversies involving ships on the high seas, and the Justices frequently cited the laws of other nations in their decisions. In 1829, for example, Marshall analyzed both Spanish and French law to settle a claim by an American who had bought a parcel of land once owned by Spain and later included in the Louisiana Purchase. Contemporary commercial disputes also cross borders, and the Justices rely on foreign and international law, as well as on American statutes, to adjudicate them. In the past two years, the Court has considered such questions as whether Mexican trucks must abide by American safety rules under NAFTA, whether the American family of a Holocaust victim could recover art seized by the Nazis in Austria, and whether a United States district court should compel the American computer-chip-makers AMD and Intel to provide documents to each other in a European antitrust dispute. "When it comes to interpreting treaties or settling international business disputes, the Court has always looked to the laws of other countries, and the practice has not been particularly controversial," says Norman Dorsen, a professor at New York University Law School.

However, beginning in the late nineteen-nineties, the Court's more liberal members began citing foreign sources to help interpret the Constitution on basic questions of individual liberties—for which the laws of foreign democracies tend to be more progressive than those at home. In 1999, Justice Stephen Breyer protested the Court's refusal to hear the appeal of a prisoner who argued that spending more than two decades on death row amounted to cruel and unusual punishment, and thus violated the Eighth Amendment. Quoting legal opinions from Jamaica, India, Zimbabwe, and the European Court of Human Rights, Breyer observed in a dissenting opinion in Knight v. Florida that "a growing number of courts outside the United States . . . have held that lengthy delay in administering a *lawful* death penalty renders ultimate execution inhuman, degrading or unusually cruel." More recently, in an opinion concurring with the Court's decision to uphold the affirmative-action program at the University of Michigan Law School, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg relied on the United Nations' International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. (In speeches, O'Connor has endorsed the use of foreign sources, but she has rarely mentioned them in constitutional-law opinions.)

Had the practice of citing foreign sources been confined to liberal—and, in the current political arrangement of the Court, less influential—Justices, it would have remained a phenomenon primarily of academic interest. But, in 2003, Kennedy drew on several foreign sources in the context of a majority opinion in one of the Court's most important cases in recent years. In Lawrence v. Texas, the Court ruled, six to three, that states could not criminalize sodomy between consenting adult homosexuals, thus overturning a seventeen-year-old precedent on the subject, Bowers v. Hardwick. In his opinion, Kennedy noted that a committee advising the British Parliament in 1957 had recommended the repeal of laws punishing homosexual conduct, that Parliament had repealed them ten years later, and that in 1981 the European Court of Human Rights had ruled that laws against gay sexual activity violated the European Convention on Human Rights. "Authoritative in all countries that are members of the Council of Europe (21 nations then, 45 nations now)," Kennedy wrote, "the decision is at odds with the premise in Bowers that the claim put forward was insubstantial in our Western civilization." (In 1996, Kennedy had written the Court's opinion invalidating Colorado's statewide anti-gay-rights ordinance.)

Earlier this year, in his opinion for the Court declaring the death penalty unconstitutional for juvenile offenders, Kennedy invoked the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. Writing for the five-to-four majority in Roper v. Simmons, Kennedy observed that only seven other countries have executed juvenile offenders since 1990—Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Nigeria, Congo, and China. "It is proper that we acknowledge the overwhelming weight of international opinion against the juvenile death penalty," he wrote, adding, "It does not lessen our fidelity to the Constitution or our pride in its origins to acknowledge that the express affirmation of certain fundamental rights by other nations and peoples simply underscores the centrality of those same rights within our own heritage of freedom."

Kennedy's reliance on foreign sources has prompted a vigorous backlash, both on and off the Court. "When Kennedy, who's hardly a liberal, started citing these international sources, that's when the subject exploded in the broader political world," says Dorsen, who in 2003 founded the *International Journal of Constitutional Law* to compare the use of foreign precedents by courts around the world. In dissenting opinions in the sodomy and juvenile-death-penalty cases, Justice Antonin Scalia, who was joined on both occasions by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Clarence Thomas, condemned any reference to foreign authority by the Supreme Court. "The basic premise of the Court's argument—that American law should comport to the laws of the rest of the world—ought to be rejected out of hand," Scalia wrote in the

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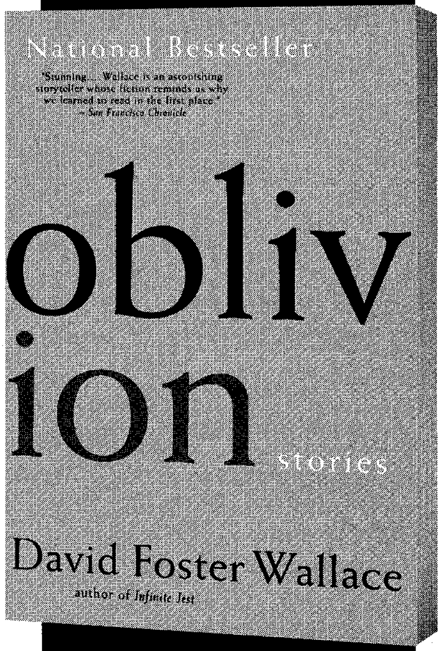
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IT'S OVER. GO HOME.
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death-penalty case. "What these foreign sources 'affirm,'" he went on, "is the Justices' own notion of how the world ought to be, and their diktat that it shall be so henceforth in America." This spring, fifty-four conservatives in the House of Representatives sponsored a resolution criticizing the use of foreign sources by the Supreme Court, and, in August, Representative Steve King, a Republican from Iowa, completed an investigation of the Justices' foreign trips, based on the disclosure forms that they are required to file. "Between 1998 and 2003, the Justices took a total of ninety-three foreign trips," King told me. "And the implication is that there are at least a couple of Justices, chiefly Kennedy and Breyer, who are more enamored of the 'enlightenment' of the world than they are bound by our own Constitution."

The debate over foreign law and the Constitution thrusts the Supreme Court into the perennial struggle in American politics between internationalists and isolationists. More important, perhaps, Kennedy's unlikely transformation into a tribune of legal multiculturalism offers a striking lesson in the unpredictability of the Court. If O'Connor's replacement, presumably John G. Roberts, Jr., turns out to be a dependable conservative, Kennedy's influence on the Court is likely to grow. With John Paul Stevens, David Souter, Ginsburg, and Breyer to his left and Rehnquist, Scalia, Thomas, and (possibly) the new Justice to his right, Kennedy's vote may increasingly determine the Court's decisions.

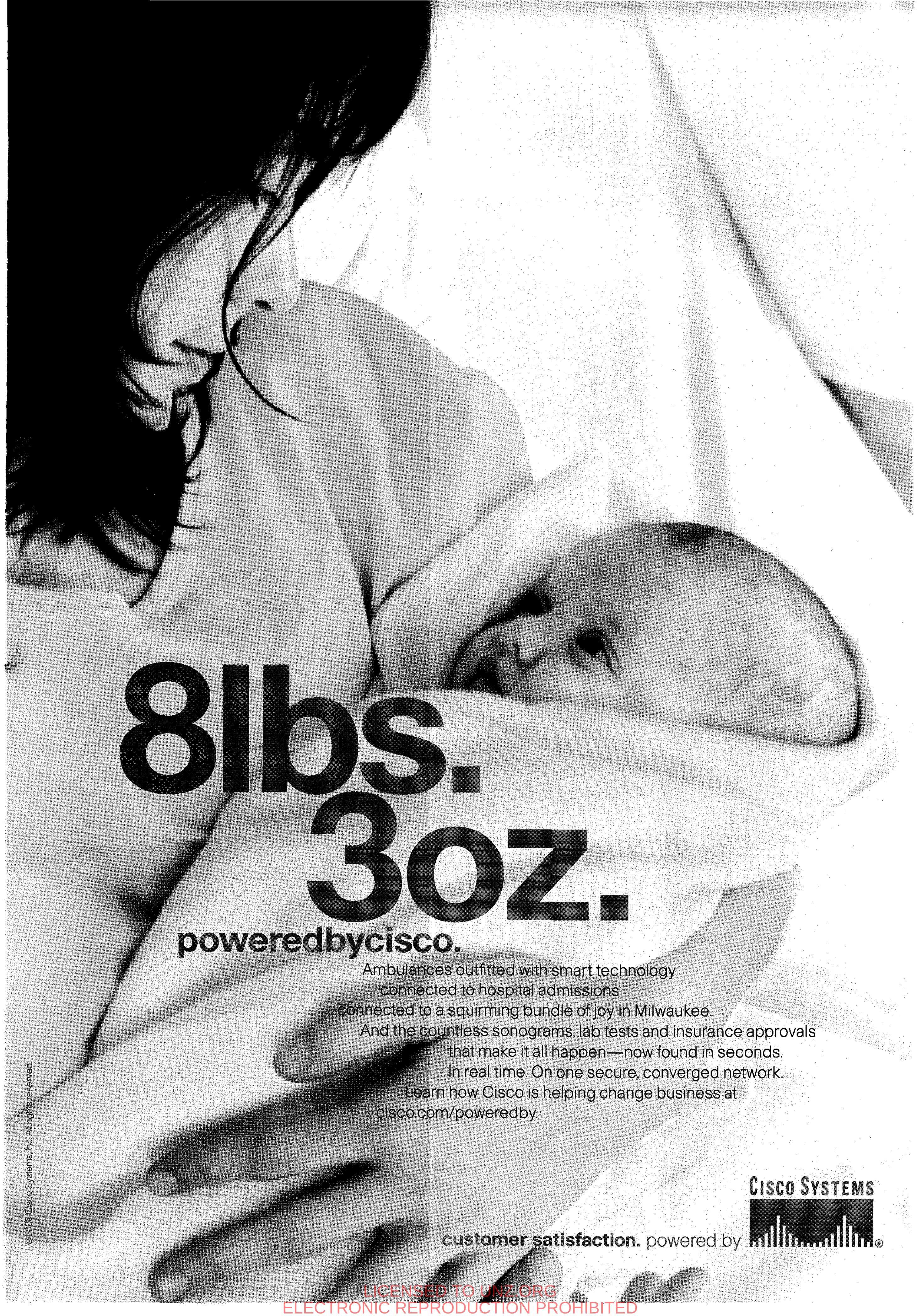
Every summer for the past fifteen years, Kennedy and his wife, Mary, have rented an apartment in Salzburg. Kennedy speaks serviceable German, navigates the winding cobblestone streets with ease, and only this year acquired a coveted pass allowing him to park his car in the old part of town. On the evening I arrived in Salzburg, Kennedy, who is a devout Catholic, invited me to join him and Mary at a Mass that his friend Wolfgang Berger, a local lawyer, organizes every year. It took place in the Müllnerkirche, which, even with its spectacular gilt altarpieces, qualifies as only a modest parish church by Salzburg standards. ("Salt was the oil of the Middle Ages," Kennedy explained. "That's why the city is called Salzburg—city of salt—and that's where the money for all these churches came from.") Just before the service, which was in German, he leaned over and whispered, "You won't understand a word, but I find with sermons that's not always a bad thing."

Like many visitors to Salzburg, Kennedy is a classical-music fan, and Berger had arranged for a performance of Haydn's "Theresienmesse" by a local orchestra and choir, which were seated in the balcony. Kennedy told me that he rarely attends the famous Salzburg Festival, which coincides with his annual visit. "The tickets are way too expensive," he said. Kennedy, who is six feet three inches tall, with a high forehead and a crown of blondish-gray hair, looks patrician, but he is, according to financial-disclosure reports, the least wealthy member of the current Court, with cash, stock holdings, and life insurance worth between seventy-five thousand and a hundred and eighty thousand dollars.

Before Kennedy joined the Supreme Court, he moonlighted as a law professor, teaching mostly night classes at the McGeorge School of Law, a branch of the University of the Pacific, in Sacramento. "I competed with 'Monday Night Football' for years," he said. He first went to Salzburg in 1987, to teach for McGeorge as part of a summer program that the school hosts at the University of Salzburg. He returned in 1990 and has taught every summer since. He takes the job seriously. After Mass, as we stepped outside into an evening drizzle, Mary Kennedy said, "Tony likes it when it rains. It means his students study harder."

Kennedy's class met for the first time the following morning, and he began his lecture by saying, "Welcome to our class, with the modest title 'Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States'—all in three weeks." A ripple of laughter passed through the room, in a renovated wing of an eighteenth-century building on campus. Kennedy is a natural teacher; in front of his students, as in his opinions from the bench, he expresses himself in plain English, rather than legalese. In Salzburg, he proudly told me that his class included twenty students from schools around the world, as well as ninety or so from McGeorge.

As Kennedy explained the structure of the U.S. Constitution to his class, he hinted at his own approach to interpreting the document. "Here you are in Europe," he said to his American students. "And you might think, Gee, look at this culture, look at these churches, look how



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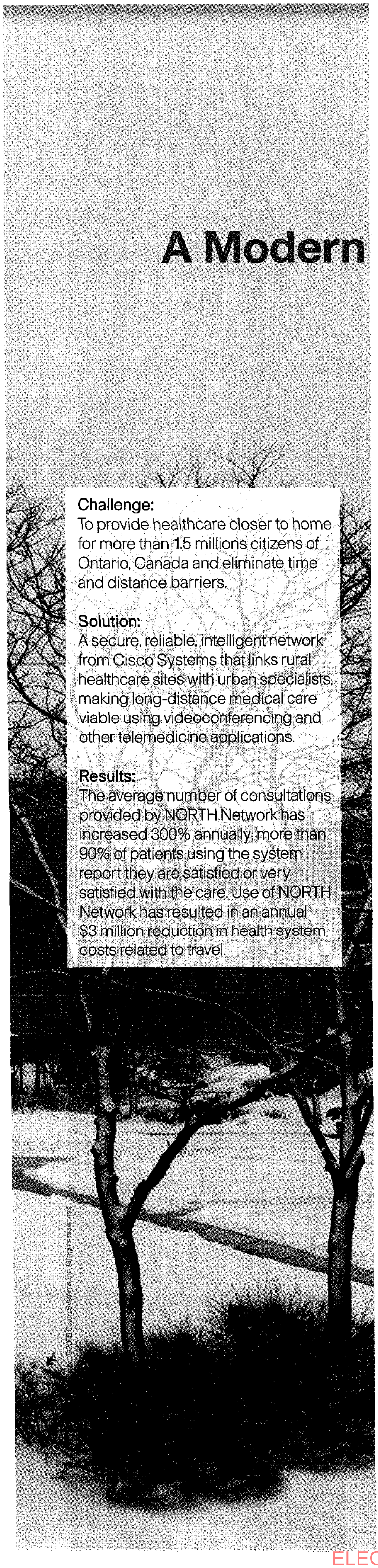

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old everything is. But you have the oldest constitution in the world. We have a legal identity, and our self-definition as a nation is bound up with the Constitution." But the document itself was not the only constitution Kennedy had in mind. "There is also the constitution with a small 'c,' the sum total of customs and mores of the community," he said. "The closer the big 'C' and the small 'c,' the better off you are as a society."

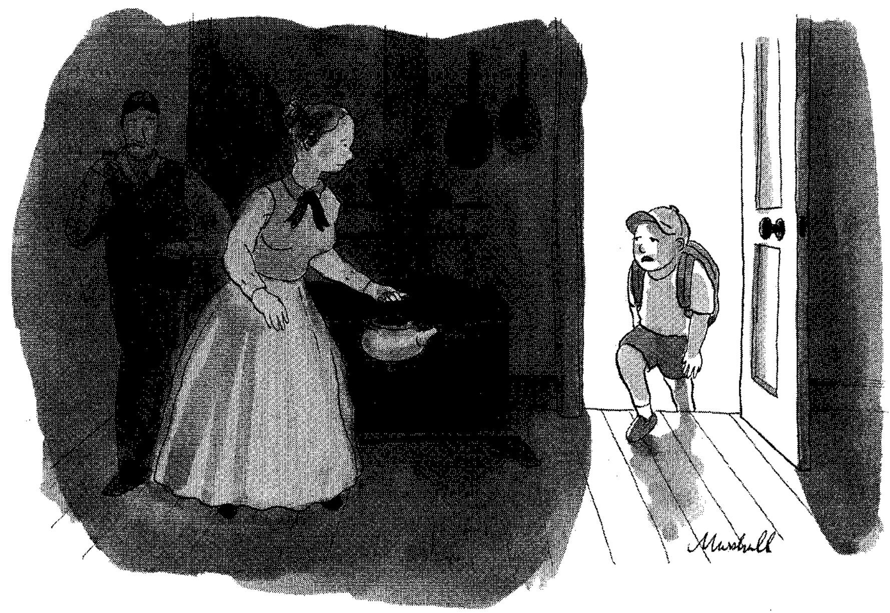
Unbeknownst to most of the students, Kennedy was making an oblique reference to one of the most contentious issues in constitutional law. A little more than a year after he joined the Supreme Court, he made a fateful choice about the meaning of the phrase "due process of law." In a 1989 case about parental rights, Michael H. v. Gerald D., the majority opinion, written by Scalia, asserted, in effect, that the due-process clause protected only what the Framers of the Constitution intended it to protect, and nothing more. If the Framers did not regard, say, the right to have an abortion, or the right to engage in homosexual sodomy, as worthy of protection (as surely they did not), then the Supreme Court should not do so, either. Kennedy disagreed with Scalia's "imposition of a single mode of historical analysis," joining an opinion by O'Connor that endorsed a more flexible notion of due process. That brief opinion has turned out to be a reliable guide to Kennedy's jurisprudence. On the bench, his view has been that the Court is obligated to consider the evolving standards of society—the constitution with a small "c"—in addition to the words of the Constitution, which are what matter to Scalia.

As Kennedy worked his way through each constitutional provision, he compared it with other nations' views on the same subject. When he came to states' rights, he said, "Margaret Thatcher was very interested in this, because she wanted to know what the American experience taught about what would happen in the European Union." Kennedy noted that the existence of separate federal and state governments allowed losing political parties in national elections to gain power and experience at the local level. "Compare Japan," Kennedy said. "For close to thirty years, no leader of the opposition party has ever held an important office."

When Kennedy referred to another country, it was often to show how its system had been influenced by the United States. He said that he had told the judges at the European Court of Human Rights, in Strasbourg, that they should provide more than cursory opinions to go with their rulings. "If you're interpreting phrases like 'liberty,' you have to do it in a way that commands the allegiance of the people," he said. Near the end of his class, Kennedy mentioned a trip to Poland that he had made last September. He had been invited to meet with the law faculty of the University of Warsaw, but when he arrived he was told that it was orientation week for the students and they, too, wanted to meet with him. "So I went to the students, and I said I was Justice Kennedy, and I wondered if they had any questions for me. Well, they started asking the most sophisticated questions I could imagine, and I finally asked them what was going on. Was this some little strategy they had decided on in advance? And they said no, they had been studying our constitutional history for nine years. Later, the rector told me the students in Poland knew our constitutional history backwards and forwards."

The Berlin Wall fell a year after Kennedy joined the Court, and the political developments that followed from Communism's collapse had a profound effect on his approach to interpreting the Constitution. Kennedy's first sustained encounter with foreign law came when he began to advise emerging democracies—including Czechoslovakia and Russia—on their constitutions and the rule of law. "I never thought I'd live in an era when we had new constitutions being founded," Kennedy told me. "I never thought we'd be in demand, but suddenly we were." In the early nineties, dozens of projects were created to export American legal expertise and ideas. International organizations, universities, and private groups began arranging meetings between American judges and their foreign counterparts. New York University sponsors frequent international judges' conferences at its Villa La Pietra, in Florence, and every year Paul Gewirtz, a professor at the Yale Law School, brings senior judges from around the world to New Haven. Most of the Justices on the Supreme Court have participated in some of these exchanges. (The exceptions are Souter and Thomas, who generally avoid foreign travel.)

Kennedy happened to spend his summers in the city where the most important international judges' conference takes place. The Salzburg Seminar was founded in 1947, by three young Harvard graduates who thought that Europe needed a place for the study of American ideals. They raised a few thousand dollars and rented the Schloss Leopoldskron, an eighteenth-century palace that had fallen into disrepair after being



*"Mom! Everybody at school says we're just a bunch of crazy Victorians."*

seized by the Nazis. The seminar became known as the "Marshall Plan of the mind," and it remains a meeting place for scholars and judges. Since 1971, nine Supreme Court Justices have attended sessions at the Schloss, many of them several times. Kennedy has participated in four seminar events, and even during summers when he is not officially involved, he visits the Schloss frequently to meet with foreign colleagues.

Kennedy went to the Schloss after his class, to have lunch with Richard Goldstone, a former justice of the South African Constitutional Court, who was in Salzburg to deliver a lecture and, like Kennedy, was eager to meet his foreign counterparts. Goldstone is among the world's most widely admired judges; the former chief war-crimes prosecutor for the United Nations, he is now a member of an independent commission investigating the oil-for-food scandal at the U.N. The Schloss Leopoldskron has tight security by Salzburg's relaxed standards, but not because of the jurists who congregate there. The palace was the setting for several scenes in "The Sound of Music," the 1965 movie, and endures more or less constant traffic from fans. (A sign on the wall closest to the street reads, in English, "Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted—Including Tour Groups.") The two men dined on the second floor, in a room adorned with mirrored panels and gilt sconces, which had been reproduced on a soundstage to create the von Trapp ballroom.

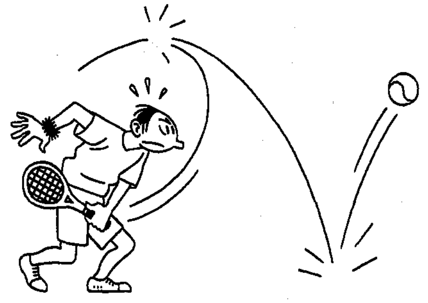
"Do you know any of the Russian judges?" Kennedy asked Goldstone. "They are so resilient."

"I've met good and bad," Goldstone replied. "Now the court belongs to the President"—Vladimir Putin.

Kennedy mentioned that he belonged to the board of an American Bar Association group that advises judges and lawyers in China, where he travels about once a year. "There was a dinner for one of their vice-premiers," he said. "I knew that I had to give a gift. We don't have a budget for these things, so I went down to the Supreme Court gift shop, and I found one of these calendars. It was in a nice leather case, and it had some anniversary from American constitutional law for every day of the year. So we're at this dinner, and I present the calendar to him, and he's so pleased, so I just say, 'When's your birthday? Why don't you look it up?' And he says whatever the date was and hands the calendar to the interpreter. So the interpreter just stands there. He looks at me. He looks around. There was this silence. Clearly, he doesn't know what to do. So I say, 'Read it, read it.' And the entry is for Dennis v. United States, affirming prison time for eleven American Communists. There was this silence again. My security guy headed to the door. Then the guest of honor just laughed and laughed." Kennedy laughed, too, adding, "I am not a world-class diplomat."

Later, he told me, "Judges check each other out. We're a guild, just like physicians or military people are guilds." Kennedy regards the use of foreign law by the Supreme Court as an inevitable effect of an increasingly interconnected world. "It really began with the Holocaust, when international law started to concern itself with how nations treated their own citizens," he told me. "Country A is concerned with how Country B treats its own citizens. So you had the beginnings of things like the European Court of Human Rights. They became the new kids on the block, but no one really knew what they did. Gradually, their work started to become known around the world. Then you started to have formal exchanges of judges." Beginning in the nineteen-seventies, as part of a program sponsored by the American College of Trial Lawyers, a rotating group of Supreme Court Justices has met every four or five years with their counterparts in England, Canada, and, on one occasion, India. "When it began, I don't think any of us had ever been inside the House of Lords," Kennedy said. "It was novel. Now it's routine. And then you have informal exchanges, like in Salzburg. You can't help but be influenced by what you see and what you hear."

Kennedy suggests that judges' use of foreign law today is a response to the availability of global sources of information, in the same way that lawyers during the progressive era began using "Brandeis briefs" in response to the advent of social-science research. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Louis Brandeis, then a Boston lawyer, began filing briefs with the Supreme Court which relied not only on judicial precedents but on empirical data, which was then beginning to be collected in a systematic way. His victory in the landmark 1908 case Muller v. Oregon, which upheld restrictions on the working hours of women—the Court's opinion noted Brandeis's references to "bureaus of statistics, commissioners of hygiene, inspectors of factories, both in this country and Europe"—changed the way lawyers and judges conceived of evidence.



The Bowers case, which Kennedy's Lawrence decision overturned, was rendered in 1986, the year before he was nominated to the Supreme Court. "When Bowers was being argued, the European Court of Human Rights had just decided Dudgeon v. United Kingdom, which went exactly the way the defendant wanted our court to go," Kennedy said. "Yet the lawyers didn't even cite it in their briefs. Now, maybe they didn't know about the case. People didn't look at those cases routinely in those days. Or maybe they thought our court would have been offended that they cited a foreign case to us. But that would never happen today. We know we have to be aware of what's going on in the world. Of course, it's not binding on us, but we can't pretend that it doesn't exist. Today, no lawyer would think of not telling us how courts around the world have approached the same question."

Clearly, it would require almost willful ignorance on the part of Supreme Court Justices not to be aware of judicial activity in other countries. The European Union translates and publishes opinions from nearly fifty nations, and the two most frequently consulted legal databases in the United States, Lexis and Westlaw, carry foreign opinions from dozens of countries. (The high courts of many countries now also routinely post their opinions on the Internet.) In many American courts, including the Supreme Court, foreign nations and international organizations regularly file briefs citing their own laws. Kennedy's opinion in the juvenile-death-

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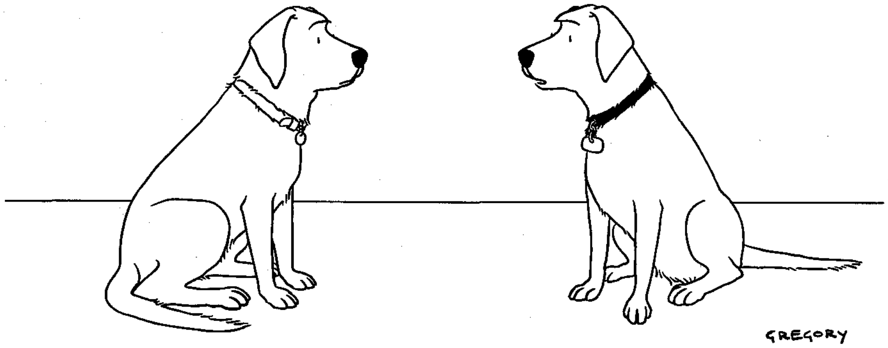

*"I had my own blog for a while, but I decided to go back to just pointless, incessant barking."*

• •

penalty case mentioned friend-of-the-court briefs submitted by the European Union and the Human Rights Committee of the Bar of England and Wales. "The way American and foreign courts are connected is not much different from the way corporations are connected," says Anne-Marie Slaughter, the dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, at Princeton, who examined the effects of globalization on the American judiciary in her 2004 book, "A New World Order." "The opinions are out there, easy to get, and the briefs are being filed. If the Justices didn't cite them, it would be like pretending the rest of the world didn't exist."

On every subject for which the Court has so far cited foreign views, notably gay rights and the death penalty, the Justices in the majority have inclined in the liberal direction. "The United States is probably the most conservative democracy in the world," Goldstone said. "The death penalty, gender, welfare—you name it. I think it would be fair to say that the most conservative member of the South African Constitutional Court would be left of the most progressive member of the United States Supreme Court. So, in looking at what other democracies are doing, it would mean looking to the left, not to the right. I think conservatives in the United States are saying, 'Don't do it, because it gives us bad answers.'"

Yet it would be a mistake to regard the dispute over foreign law and the Supreme Court as simply another iteration of America's conservative-liberal split. Kennedy and Breyer, the two Justices most prominently associated with the controversy over foreign law, have considerable political differences. In January, Breyer conducted a public debate on the subject with Scalia, an unprecedented encounter between sitting Supreme Court Justices. At the law school of American University, in Washington, D.C., before a crowd of about four hundred, with hundreds more watching the event online, Scalia declared that foreign laws were irrelevant, because "we don't have the same moral and legal framework as the rest of the world, and never have." Breyer responded that, though foreign laws could never be binding on an American court, they were still worth examining. Foreign judges "have problems that often, more and more, are similar to our own," he said. "They're dealing with texts that more and more protect basic human rights. If here I have a human being called a judge in a different country dealing with a similar problem, why don't I read what he says, if it's similar enough? Maybe I'll learn something."

Kennedy offers a more tactical reason to cite foreign law. "Let me ask you this," he said to me from across a lacquered coffee table in a Chinese-themed sitting room at the Schloss. "Why should world opinion care that the American Administration wants to bring freedom to oppressed peoples? Is that not because there's some underlying common mutual interest, some underlying common shared idea, some underlying common shared aspiration, underlying unified concept of what human dignity means? I think that's what we're trying to tell the rest of the world, anyway." In other words, Kennedy believes that by invoking foreign law the United States Supreme Court sends an implicit message to the rest of the democratic world that our society shares its values. "The European courts, in particular the transnational courts, have been somewhat concerned, and some feel demeaned, that we did not cite their decisions with more regularity," he said. "They cite ours all the time. And, basically, they were saying, 'Why should we cite yours if you don't cite ours?' " He went on, "If we are asking the rest of the world to adopt our idea of freedom, it does seem to me that there may be some mutuality there, that other nations and other peoples can define and interpret freedom in a way that's at least instructive to us."

Kennedy's argument amounts to a corollary to President Bush's policy of exporting freedom. The difference is that Kennedy believes that American evangelism for freedom is more likely to succeed if it includes listening as well as lecturing. "Liberty isn't for export only," he said. This is what especially riles his critics: the notion that the shifting enthusiasms of foreign judges could affect the meaning of the U.S. Constitution. Cosmopolitanism on the Court is seen by many as élitist and un-American. Robert Bork, whose failed nomination to the Supreme Court in 1987 led to Kennedy's appointment, says, "The class that is commonly called the intelligentsia is composed of people who may not do very good intellectual work but who make their living with words and ideas. Judges belong to that class and respond to its values, which they impose as constitutional law. Our Justices are said to be engaged in a worldwide constitutional conversation. It more closely resembles a worldwide constitutional convention."

This view is echoed by conservatives in Congress, including Tom Feeney, a Florida Republican, who is the chief sponsor of the resolution condemning the Supreme Court's use of foreign law. "When judges intermingle with other élite jurists, there is a tendency to want to be part of the club," Feeney said. "And it's a very élite club. It's perfectly defensible to say that you want to be governed by an oligarchy of philosopher kings. But five wise, élite Justices imposing policies on us from the bench is not the constitutional democracy that the Framers gave us." In

May, Kennedy testified before a House committee about the Supreme Court's budget, and he mentioned in passing that, like many lawyers, he conducted legal research on the Internet. This prompted Tom DeLay, the House Majority Leader, to tell an interviewer from Fox News Radio, "We've got Justice Kennedy writing decisions based upon international law, not the Constitution of the United States. That's just outrageous, and, not only that, he said in session that he does his own research on the Internet. That is just incredibly outrageous."

When I asked Kennedy about DeLay's comments, he smiled and replied evenly, "The nature of the United States is that we're diverse." But a few weeks earlier, near the end of the Court's term, in June, Kennedy had given a more pointed retort. For a reunion of Chief Justice Rehnquist's law clerks, he made a brief video, during which he was taped sitting at his computer. He said that he was doing a little research. He signed off by saying goodbye in several languages.

Kennedy turned sixty-nine in July, but it's easy to see why he rarely figures in the speculation about retirement that clings to other Justices. He's extraordinarily fit for his age. Last year, while on vacation in Greece, he and his wife came across a group staging a reënactment of the ancient Olympic Games, and Kennedy entered the hundred-metre dash. His height gave him an advantage in the race—which was run barefoot but not, as in ancient Greece, nude—because, he said, pointing to his thigh, "the toga they gave me only came down to here." Even so, he didn't win. "They put me with forty- and fifty-year-olds," he said. "I didn't have a chance." He seems enthusiastic about his likely new colleague, John Roberts, who has argued thirty-nine cases before the Court. "He was a marvellous oral advocate," Kennedy said. "So we feel like we know him in that regard."

When the Court reconvenes next month, Kennedy could hold the balance of power on questions pertaining to church-state relations, gay rights, and, especially, abortion—all issues likely to come before the Court during the next several years. Yet, in such cases, conservatives' fears about the liberal influence of foreign law on Kennedy's views could turn out to be misplaced. Church-state traditions in other democracies vary widely. Some nations, like England, have state religions; others, like France, have a secular orientation but subsidize and regulate religious education. Kennedy has generally sided with his conservative colleagues on the separation of church and state; in June, he voted to allow the posting of the Ten Commandments at the Texas state capitol and in a Kentucky courthouse. (The full Court allowed the display in Texas, which has been in place for decades without drawing much attention, and rejected the one in Kentucky, which is newer and more controversial.)

Foreign law is more likely to affect Kennedy's positions on gay rights and abortion. His opinions in the Colorado and Texas cases have made him the Court's most visible defender of gay rights, but his support for gay marriage, a subject many expect the Court will eventually take on, seems far from certain. In the Lawrence decision, Kennedy cited a consensus in "Western civilization" against punishing homosexual sodomy. But foreign traditions of tolerance for homosexual activity have not led to broad international support for gay marriage; only Belgium, Canada, Spain, and the Netherlands currently permit gay people to wed. That does not seem like the kind of mandate that Kennedy will feel compelled to join.

Kennedy's views on abortion have long been ambiguous. In 1989, he joined an opinion by Rehnquist that appeared to call for overturning Roe v. Wade; then, in 1992, in the case of Planned Parenthood v. Casey, Kennedy joined Souter and O'Connor in an opinion that reaffirmed the core of Roe—that is, the right of a woman to terminate an early-term pregnancy. Since then, Kennedy has generally been counted as an abortion-rights vote, along with Souter, O'Connor, Stevens, Ginsburg, and Breyer, but that may not be an accurate inference. Over the past decade, Kennedy has repeatedly expressed his concerns about abortion. Dissenting from a 2000 ruling that upheld the conviction of anti-abortion protesters for trespassing, he criticized the majority for denying "these protesters, in the face of what they consider to be one of life's gravest moral crises, even the opportunity to try to offer a fellow citizen a little pamphlet, a handheld paper seeking to reach a higher law." That same year, Kennedy wrote an uncharacteristically vitriolic dissent to the Court's decision to strike down a Nebraska law banning late-term (or partial-birth) abortion—what he called "a procedure many decent and civilized people find so abhorrent as to be among the most serious of crimes against human life."

Kennedy's reservations about abortion are reflected in foreign statutes. Most other countries have more restrictive abortion laws than the United States, as Scalia pointed out in his dissent in this year's juvenile-death-penalty case, noting that the United States is "one of only six countries that allow abortion on demand until the point of viability." He accused the Justices in the majority of cherry-picking foreign laws to suit their predispositions, writing, "To invoke alien law when it agrees with one's own thinking, and ignore it otherwise, is not reasoned decision-making, but sophistry."

When I mentioned abortion to Kennedy, I said, "You will probably be the single vote preserving Roe v. Wade."

"Perhaps, perhaps not," he replied.

Unlike some of his colleagues, Kennedy arrived at the Court without a formal judicial philosophy to help him decide each case. He has absorbed the diverse lessons of a changing world. As we concluded our talk in Salzburg, I showed him a piece of paper that his friend Wolfgang Berger had given to me at the Mass several days earlier. It was an English translation of the readings for the service, from the Book of Wisdom 12:13, which included the lines "For there is no God, other than you, who cares for everyone, to whom you have to prove that your sentences have been just." Throughout the verse, I said, God was portrayed as a judge.

"The fascinating thing I thought about when I read this was that He has considerable discretion," Kennedy said. "There's also no appeal." ♦

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*From the San Juan (P. R.) Star.*

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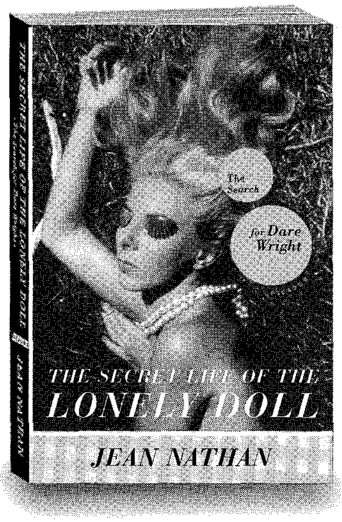
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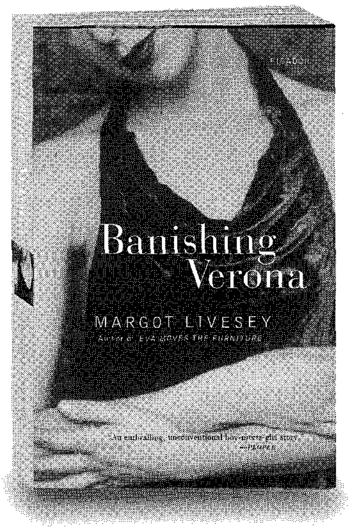

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# STEALING TIME

*What makes Rickey Henderson run?*

BY DAVID GRANN

One summer night not long ago, Rickey Henderson, the greatest base stealer and lead-off hitter in baseball history, stood in a dugout, pinching the front of his jersey and plucking it several inches from his chest—"peacocking," as some players call it. He went through the same pregame rituals that he has performed since he was a rookie outfielder with the Oakland A's, in 1979. He sorted through a bunch of bats, asking, "Which one of you bad motherfuckers has got a hit in you?" Picking one up with resin on the handle, he cocked it back, waiting for an imaginary pitch, and talked to himself in the third person, the words running together so fast that they were nearly unintelligible: "Let's-burn-Rickey-come-on-let's-burn."

Henderson is accustomed not only to beating his opponents but also to lording his abilities over them. As a ten-time All Star for the A's, the New York Yankees, and seven other teams, he stole more than fourteen hundred bases—a record that is considered untouchable, like Joe DiMaggio's fifty-six-game hitting streak. He scored more runs than Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, or Hank Aaron. Bill James, the oracle of baseball statistics, wrote, "Without exaggerating one inch, you could find fifty Hall of Famers who, all taken together, don't own as many records." Or, as Henderson puts it, "I'm a walking record."

As Henderson stepped onto the field, he stopped abruptly. A foul odor was seeping from under the dugout. "Where's it coming from?" one of his teammates asked. Several players bent down, trying to find the source of the smell; previously, the manager had found a dead rat in the stadium.

"I think it's coming from over here," one player said. "See that hole?"

Henderson tried to ignore the commotion and resume his routine. He walked toward the batter's box, moving casually, as if he were out for an evening stroll. An opposing player once noted that it took him longer to get to the batter's box than to drive to the stadium. Henderson has said that his slow approach is a way to get into a pitcher's head; opponents have said that it is simply another means for Henderson to let the world take stock of him. As he reached the batter's box, informing the world what Rickey was going to do to the ball, he again seemed disconcerted, and looked up at the crowd: there were only six hundred or so fans in the stadium, and many of the women had dressed up, as part of a promotional Eighties Night, in sequins and lace stockings, like Madonna in her "Like a Virgin" phase.

Earlier, Henderson had confessed to me, "Last night, I dropped down on my knees and I asked God, 'Why are you doing this to Rickey? Why did you put me here?'"

An announcer called his name on the scratchy P.A. system: "Now batting lead-off for the San Diego Surf Dawgs . . . RICKEY HENDERSON."

The man who once proclaimed "I am the greatest of all time!" was, at the age of forty-six, playing in the Golden Baseball League. It wasn't the majors. It wasn't even part of the minor-league farm system. It was an independent league, which consisted largely of players who had never made it to the minors, or had washed out of them. Created by two Stanford business-school graduates, the league—which began operating this spring, with eight teams in Arizona and California—is widely considered to be the bottom of the bottom. Yet it is here that Henderson suited up for three thousand dollars a month, less than he could bring in selling a piece of memorabilia from his days in the majors.

"Come on, hot *dawwwg*, let's see what you can do!" a fan yelled.

Henderson tapped the dirt out of his cleats and got into his crouch, staring at the pitcher, a twenty-four-year-old right-hander for the Mesa Miners. Several nights earlier, Henderson had singled and stolen second base, sliding head first in a cloud of dust, to the delight of fans, but, this time, he hit a weak liner to the second baseman for an easy out. As he made his way to the dugout, one of the hecklers in the crowd yelled, "Hey, Rickey, where's your fucking wheelchair?"

PERFORM LIKE A CHAMPION TODAY

*"It's like they put a stamp on me: 'Hall of Fame. You're done,'" Henderson said. "It's a goddam shame." Photograph by Evan Hurd.*

Other baseball greats have insisted on playing past their prime: at forty, Babe Ruth, in his last major-league season, batted .181 for the Boston Braves. But Henderson's decision to go so far as to join the Surf Dawgs—which, the team's former publicist admitted, was frequently assumed to be a girls' softball team—has been a source of astonishment. His last stint in the majors was in 2003, when he played part of the season for the Los Angeles Dodgers. He hit a mere .208, with three stolen bases. (His last productive season was in 1999.) The Dodgers management, concluding that time had finally defeated "the man of steal," as he was often called, unceremoniously released him. He had played three thousand and eighty-one games, putting him fourth on the all-time list. He was forty-four years old, and most fans reasonably assumed that he would retire and wait for his induction into the Hall of Fame. Instead, he played the 2004 season with the Newark Bears, in the independent Atlantic League, before switching to the Golden Baseball League. Manny Ramirez, the Boston Red Sox slugger, who played alongside Henderson in 2002, has said that Henderson must be "crazy," and a sportswriter declared that it would take "a team of psychiatrists" to figure him out. Even one of his three daughters, Alexis, asked, "Dad, why are you doing this?"

A few hours before the game against the Miners, I found Henderson sitting on a metal chair in the Surf Dawgs' locker room, with his shirt off. He insisted that he was no different from anyone else in the league: he simply wanted to make it to the majors. But he also seemed shocked by his own predicament, by the riddle of age. As he put it, "There are pieces of this puzzle that Rickey is still working out."

He stood to put on his uniform. He is five feet ten, and, like a Rockette, most of his height seems to come from his legs, which he calls "the essence of my game"; they dwarf his torso, which always appears to be pressing forward, as if he were bursting out of a starting gate. His eyes betray frequent shifts in mood—they squint with displeasure, then widen with delight—and, during games, he often hides them behind wraparound sunglasses. He put on his jersey, which was white, with powder-blue sleeves, and pulled his pants above his hips; when he slipped on his cap, only the creases on his forehead and around his mouth confirmed that he was as old as many of his teammates' fathers. Extending his arms, he said, "Look at me. I ain't got no injuries. I got no problem with my eyes. My knees are good. The only problem I have is a little pain in my hip, and it ain't nothin' a little ice can't cure."

Henderson knew that he had only a few months to prove to a scout that he was able to play at the highest level—the major-league season ended in October. He told me that not long after he began playing for the Newark Bears he called Billy Beane, the general manager of the Oakland A's. Most of Henderson's greatest achievements in baseball, including his first World Series ring, in 1989, stemmed from his time on the A's, and he told Beane that he wanted to return to the team more than to any other. "Then I could go out the way I came in," he said. Beane responded that the A's, which are currently vying for a spot in the playoffs, had no room for him. Nevertheless, Henderson said, "I ain't giving up hope. I know if people would just come out to see me play they would realize that Rickey is still Rickey."

He arrived hours before a game, and would slash at balls as they shot out of a pitching machine at eighty-five miles an hour, while the Surf Dawgs' adopted theme song blared over the loudspeakers: "Who let the dogs out? Woof! Woof! Woof! Woof!" On some mornings, he could be seen running up and down the bleachers. Jose Canseco, who played with Henderson on the A's, and who helped to fuel the explosion of performance-enhancing drugs in the major leagues, has said of Henderson, "That's one of the guys who's not on steroids!"

"They kept that shit a secret from me," Henderson said. "I wish they *had* told me. My God, could you imagine Rickey on 'roids? Oh, baby, look out!" He laughed in an easygoing way. "Maybe if they weren't juicing there'd still be a spot on a ball club for me. People always ask me why I still want to play, but I want to know why no one will give me an opportunity. It's like they put a stamp on me: 'Hall of Fame. You're done. That's it.' It's a goddam shame."

As Henderson was talking to me, one of his teammates, who had tousled hair and looked to be about eighteen, walked over. He was holding a baseball and a pen in his hand. He said to Henderson, "I feel funny asking, but could you sign this?"

Henderson smiled and signed the ball.

"Thank you, Rickey," the young man said, holding the ball along the seams, so as not to smudge the ink.

Henderson turned back to me, and said, "I'll tell you the truth. I'd give everything up—every record, the Hall of Fame, all of it—for just one more chance."

Base stealers are often considered their own breed: reckless, egocentric, sometimes even a touch mad. Ron LeFlore, who stole ninety-seven bases with the Montreal Expos, was a convicted armed robber; Ty Cobb, who was called "psychotic" by his authorized biographer, used to slide with his spikes in the air, in an effort to take out the second baseman; even Lou Brock, who was more gentlemanly, believed that one of his greatest assets was unbridled arrogance. Henderson, by all accounts, was a natural-born thief. Lloyd Moseby, a childhood friend of his who played for the Toronto Blue Jays, told *Sports Illustrated*, "Rickey hasn't changed since he was a little kid. He could strut before he could walk, and he always lived for the lights."

Henderson grew up with little outside the game: when he was two, his father disappeared, abandoning the family, and, after his mother moved to California to find work, he and his four brothers remained in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, for several years, in the care of a grandmother. In 1976, when Henderson was seventeen, the Oakland A's drafted him in the fourth round and assigned him to one of their minor-league teams, in Boise, Idaho. From the beginning, he was intense, moody, and flamboyant. If he hit what looked like an easy ground out, he sometimes refused to run it out, to the consternation of the manager. But, when he thought the opportunity was ripe, his speed was unparalleled. One night in Fresno, California, in 1977, he stole seven bases, tying a record for a single game. Two years later, in the middle of the season, the Oakland A's called him up to the majors.

With his new money, Henderson hired a group of detectives to find his father. "I didn't care if he was a bad guy or a good guy," Henderson told me. "I just wanted to know him." The private eyes reported back to his mother, who informed him, "Your father is dead. He died a few years ago in a car accident." In 1980, however, Henderson found an unlikely father figure in Billy Martin, the A's new manager. Martin was a pugnacious drinker who, on at least one occasion, slugged one of his own players. But he and Henderson shared an in-your-face approach to the game—Martin hung on his office wall a poster that said, "There can be no rainbow without a cloud and a storm"—and together they developed a manic style of play, known as Billy Ball, that was as terrifying as it was exhilarating. As Henderson has put it, "Billy was the publisher of Billy Ball, and I was the author."

Because the A's didn't have a lot of power, they couldn't rely on three-run homers and big innings; they had to manufacture runs, to create them out of the slightest opportunities. As the lead-off hitter, Henderson was the catalyst, or, as he likes to say, "the creator of chaos." He had remarkable strength (twice, he finished the season with a higher slugging percentage than Mark McGwire), but his principal role was to be a nuisance, a pest—to "get on base, any damn way I can," and begin wreaking havoc on the defense.

As part of his strategy, he had developed one of the most distinctive and infuriating batting stances ever seen. Each hitter has a strike zone that extends roughly from his chest to his knees. Henderson, by collapsing his shoulders to his knees—by practically doubling over—made his strike zone seem uncommonly small; one sportswriter quipped that it was "the size of Hitler's heart." With so little room for the pitcher to throw a strike, Henderson would frequently eke out a walk. (In 2001, he broke Babe Ruth's record for total walks, and is now second, behind Barry Bonds.) Or he would crush the ball—he is one of only twenty-five players in history with more than three thousand hits. Once he was on base, the chaos began: he would often steal second, then steal third; he stole home four times. In his first full year, he broke Ty Cobb's American League record of ninety-six stolen bases in a season, which had stood since 1915; two seasons later, he blew past Lou Brock's major-league mark of a hundred and eighteen. Thomas Boswell, of the Wash-

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ington *Post*, wrote, "Not since Babe Ruth hit fifty-four home runs in 1920—thirty more than anyone else had hit in a season—has one of baseball's fundamental areas of offensive production been in such danger of major redefinition. . . . Now, perhaps for the first time, a player's skill is challenging the basic dimensions of the diamond."

His mere presence on the base paths was a force of psychic disruption. Distracted infielders made errors, and pitchers, finding themselves unable to concentrate, gave up easy hits to subsequent batters. As the former Yankee captain Don Mattingly has said, "Basically, he terrorizes a team." Henderson would score in ways that made his heroics nearly invisible: he would often get a walk, then steal second, then advance to third on a ground ball, and, finally, come home on a routine fly ball to the outfield. In other words, he regularly scored when neither he nor his teammates registered a single hit.

But there was also something out of control about Henderson. A base stealer takes his team's fortunes into his own hands; if he decides to run and gets thrown out, he can devastate a team's chances for a big inning. In 1982, Henderson didn't merely set a season record for steals; he also set one for being caught (forty-two times). The very traits that won him praise—bravado, guile, defiance—also made him despised. During a 1982 game against the Detroit Tigers, when he needed only one more base to tie Brock's record, he singled but had no chance to steal, because there was a slow base runner on second. Violating every norm of the game, Billy Martin ordered the man on second to take such a big lead that he would get picked off. Henderson's path was now clear, and he took off, sure that he was safe at second, but the umpire called him out, allegedly muttering, "You got to earn it."

Baseball has an unspoken etiquette about lopsided games, and Henderson's habit of stealing when his team was already trouncing an opponent was widely seen as unsportsmanlike. In 2001, while Henderson was playing with the San Diego Padres in a game against the Milwaukee Brewers, he took off in the seventh inning, when his team was leading by seven runs. The Brewers' manager, Davey Lopes, who had been one of the most aggressive base stealers of his day, was so incensed that he stormed onto the field, yelling that the next time Henderson came up to bat the pitcher was going to "drill" him. The threat was clearly in earnest, and Henderson was removed from the game. "We're old school," Lopes said later.

And it wasn't just the way Henderson ran the bases that irked traditionalists. In 1985, after being traded to the Yankees, he was asked what it would be like to play on the same field that once knew Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle, and he replied, "I don't care about them. . . . It's Rickey time." When he hit a home run, he would stop and watch it go over the fence, then arc ostentatiously around first base, one elbow outstretched like a bird's wing. Instead of simply catching a ball, he would make a show of snatching it out of the air. "I don't appreciate that hot-dog garbage in my ballpark," the former Orioles catcher Rick Dempsey, who once had to be restrained by an umpire from attacking Henderson, said.

Henderson earned a reputation for creating tumult off the field as well. He held general managers hostage with his contractual demands. "I've got to have my money guaranteed," he'd say. Or, in one of his more Yogi Berra-like phrases, "All I'm asking for is what I want." Once, when he couldn't find his limousine upon leaving a ballpark, he was heard saying, "Rickey don't like it when Rickey can't find Rickey's limo." In 1989, the A's signed him to a four-year contract worth twelve million dollars, which made him the highest-paid player in the game; but less than two years later, after several players surpassed that sum, he demanded a new contract. The pitcher Goose Gossage, who played with Henderson on the A's, once said, "Henderson set a new standard for selfishness. He made Jose Canseco look like a social worker." By the end of his career in the majors, Henderson was recognized as one of the best players of all time, but, in the view of many players and sportswriters, he was also "greedy," "egomaniacal," "Tropical Storm Rickey," "the classic baseball mercenary," and "the King of I." In other words, he was the last player anyone thought would join the Golden Baseball League.

"I can't be late," Henderson said.

He was at the Los Angeles airport, waiting for a morning flight to Yuma, Arizona, where, for a July game against the Scorpions, the Golden Baseball League was hosting Rickey Henderson Night. (The first thousand fans to arrive at the game would receive Rickey Henderson bobble-head dolls.) The league, realizing that Henderson helped give it legitimacy, had offered him various perks to sign on, and, unlike the rest of the players, he didn't have to endure long bus rides to away games—he flew by commercial airplane. And so, while the team was spending five hours on a bus to Yuma, Henderson picked up his bags and boarded the plane. He was wearing an elegant tan shirt and matching pants, and a gold Rolex studded with diamonds. During his career, he has earned more than forty million dollars in salary alone. He owns dozens of rental properties, as well as a hundred-and-fifty-acre ranch, near Yosemite National Park, where he spent time in the off-season with his wife and their daughters. He also has a Porsche, a Rolls-Royce, a Bentley, a BMW, a Mercedes, a Cadillac, a G.M. truck, a T-bird, and a Ferrari. "I've told major-league clubs, 'Don't worry about your bank account—I'll play for free,'" Henderson said. "This ain't about my portfolio."

As he waited for the plane to taxi to the runway, he checked his cell phone to see if his agent had called with any word from the majors. "Nothing," he said. After holding power over general managers for so long, Henderson seemed uncertain what to do now that they held power over him. He had even considered crashing a Colorado Rockies tryout for high-school and college players. He knew that his reputation had probably hurt his chances of being brought onto a team as an elder statesman and bench player. "There's always that concern: Will Rickey be willing to come off the bench?" Henderson said. "I would. If you let me retire in a major-league uniform, you won't hear a peep out of me." Henderson regularly scoured the news reports for injuries and roster changes in the majors, to see if there might be an opening.

"Who's that new guy they got playing center field for the Yankees?" Henderson asked me.

"Tony Womack," I said.

"Womack, huh?" he said, then added in frustration, "My God, you mean to tell me I ain't better than him?"

He placed a call on his cell phone, and

began talking over the roar of the engine. The stewardess, who seemed unusually tense, asked him sharply to turn the phone off. He said that he would, but requested that she ask him nicely. Within moments, security officers had boarded the plane to remove him.

"What the hell's going on?" he asked.

"Is that Rickey Henderson?" a passenger asked.

"Look how cut he is," another said. "I hear he never lifts weights—he only does pushups and situps."

"You'll have to come with us," an officer told Henderson.

I stood up to get off with Henderson, and the officer asked who I was.

"That's my biographer and lawyer," Henderson said.

The passengers began to shout, "You can't take Rickey!" But the stewardess wouldn't relent, although Henderson said that if he had done something to offend her he was happy to apologize. The plane took off without us.

"See, man?" Henderson said to me. "I cause controversy even when I don't do nothin'. That's the way it's always been."

The airline, seemingly embarrassed by his removal, tried to find us another flight, but the next one to Yuma didn't leave until the evening. "I gotta make my game," Henderson said. "It's Rickey Henderson Night."

Eventually, the airline found us a flight to Imperial, California, which was about an hour's drive from Yuma; from there, the airline said, it would provide a car to take us to the stadium. When we arrived at the Imperial airport, a middle-aged man standing in the baggage-claim area said, "Rickey, what brings you to Imperial?"

"Got a game tonight in Yuma."

"In *Yuma*?"

"Playing in a new independent league over there."

"You trying to make it back to the show?"

"That's the plan."

"Well, I sure wish they'd give you a shot. They never treat us old guys well."

We drove in a van across the desert to Yuma, which is known primarily for a prison that once housed outlaws from the Wild West. When we reached Desert Sun Stadium, Henderson seemed taken aback—it was little more than a field with bleachers and a water tank looming over it. "It ain't Yankee Stadium, is it?" Henderson said.

The temperature was a hundred and nine degrees, and it was hard to breathe. Henderson signed autographs and posed for photographs with fans—"I'm, like, the Babe Ruth of the independent leagues," he said—and then went into the clubhouse to suit up. The bus for the rest of the team had already arrived, and the players were lounging in their underwear; a few were chewing sunflower seeds and discussing a rumor that a scout from a major-league organization had appeared at a recent game.

By now, Henderson knew most of his teammates' stories. There was Nick Guerra, a former college star who worked a construction job in the mornings to support his family. There was Scott Goodman, a slightly pear-shaped power hitter, who once hit eighteen home runs for a minor-league team affiliated with the Florida Marlins but was released anyway. And there was Adam Johnson, perhaps the most promising player on the team, a twenty-six-year-old starting pitcher who had lost only one game all season. The manager, Terry Kennedy, who had played fourteen years in the major leagues as a catcher, and whose father had played in the majors as well, told me, "I sometimes call this the Discovery League. Everybody here is trying to discover something about themselves—whether they should continue pursuing their dream or whether it's time to finally let it go."

Henderson and Goodman went out to the batting cage together. Goodman, who was among the league leaders in home runs and R.B.I.s, had been struggling with his swing in recent games.

"How you feeling?" Henderson asked him.

"Last night, I wasn't getting my bat out right."

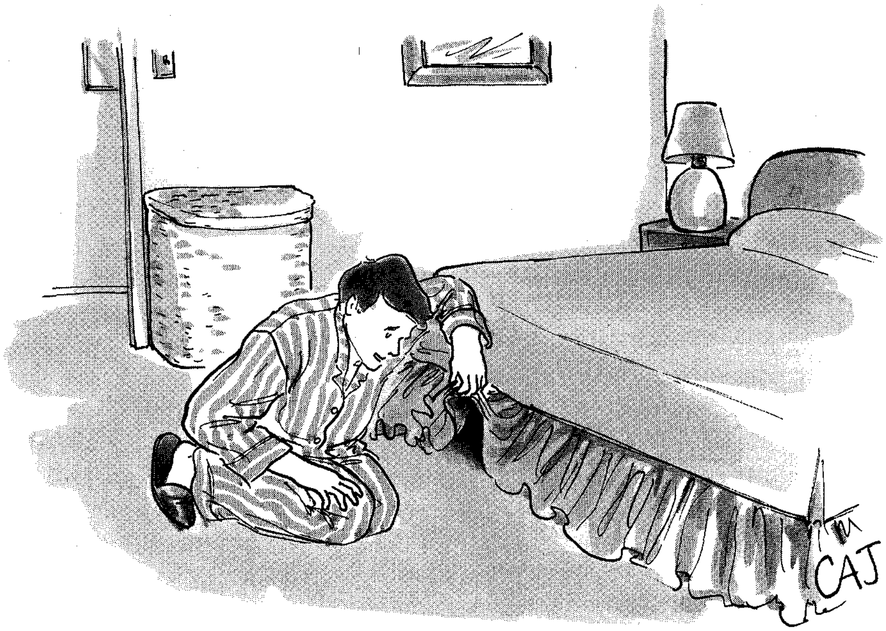
"I don't mean last night. I'm not worried about last night. How do you feel now?"

"I don't know," Goodman said. "It's like I'm not getting my weight behind anything." He went into the cage and swung at several pitches.

"See your foot?" Henderson said. "You're stepping too far in, instead of toward the pitcher."

Goodman inspected the divot in the dirt where his front foot had landed. "You're right," he said. "I never noticed."

Kennedy told me that he had initially worried how Henderson would fit in with the team, especially considering his perks. "I was never into guys who chirp," he said. But, to his surprise, Henderson had gone out of his way to mentor other players. "I don't want to go too deep into his head," Kennedy said. "But some-



*"Jen? You seem a little withdrawn."*

• •

thing's clearly going on in there. I think maybe he's trying to show clubs that he's willing to be a different player."

After a while, Goodman and Henderson returned to the clubhouse. They put on their road uniforms, which were gray and navy blue, and walked onto the field, their cleats leaving marks in the sticky grass. Despite the heat, more than four thousand people had come out for Rickey Henderson Night—the biggest crowd in Yuma since the opening night of the season. As Henderson took his position in center field, a yellow Volkswagen Beetle, with a pair of rodent-like ears attached to its roof and a curly tail sticking out of its trunk, circled the grass. "It's time to exterminate the competition," the stadium announcer said. "Truly Nolen Pest Control—We get the bugs out for you." After the first inning, Henderson sat on the bench, his uniform already soaked with sweat, while cheerleaders danced on the dugout roof over his head. The announcer said, "See if you can answer tonight's trivia question! The question is: What year was Rickey Henderson originally drafted by the Oakland A's?"

"Nineteen seventy-six," one of Henderson's teammates said.

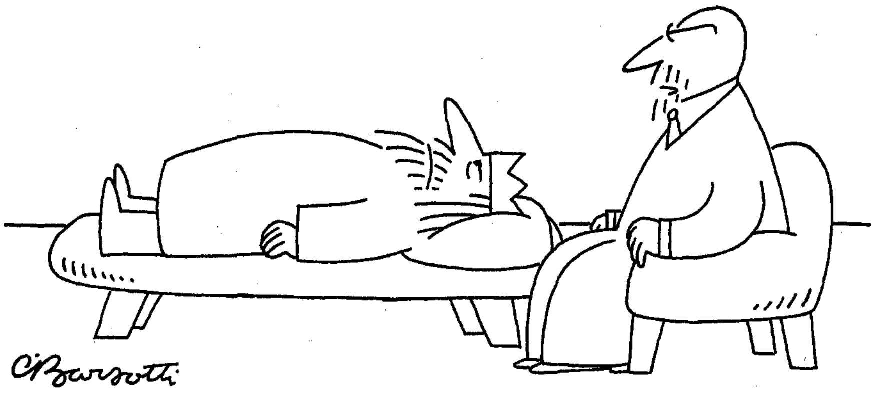
"I wasn't even born then," another said.

At one point, with Henderson playing center field, a shot was hit over his head and he began to run, unleashing at least a memory of his speed. He looked back over his shoulder, trying to bring the ball into focus, and made a nice catch. "Thataway, Rickey!" his teammates yelled when he came back to the dugout.

Even though Henderson played well, with two singles and a walk, the Surf Dawgs lost, 5–0. His wife, who had come to see him play that weekend with two of their daughters, told the team's general manager, "Why won't he just quit and come home?" As he left the field, fireworks began to explode in the sky above him, the finale of Rickey Henderson Night.

One afternoon before a home game, Kennedy approached Henderson at the ballpark and asked if he would teach the other players the art of stealing. Kennedy knew that, in recent years, base stealing had been all but forgotten in the major leagues. Team owners, convinced that home runs brought people to the stadium, had built smaller and smaller ballparks; at the same time, players made their muscles bigger and bigger with steroids. Since 1982, when Henderson broke the single-season record for steals, home-run totals had risen by sixty-one per cent, while the number of stolen bases had fallen nearly twenty per cent. But Kennedy knew how devastating stealing could be: he had been with the San Francisco Giants in the 1989 World Series, when Henderson and the A's swept the Giants in four games and Henderson set a post-season record, with eleven stolen bases.

Henderson agreed to give a demonstration, and there was a buzz as Goodman, Johnson, and the other players gathered around first base. Henderson stepped off the bag, spread his legs, and bent forward, wiggling his fingers. "The most important thing to being a good base stealer is you got to be fearless," he said. "You know they're all coming for you; everyone in the stadium knows they're coming for you. And you got to say to yourself, 'I don't give a dang. I'm gone.'" He said that every pitcher has the equivalent of a poker player's "tell," something that tips the runner off when he's going to throw home. Before a runner gets on base, he needs to identify that tell, so he can take advantage of it. "Sometimes a pitcher lifts a heel, or wiggles a shoulder, or cocks an elbow, or lifts his cap," Henderson said, indicating each giveaway with a crisp gesture.



*"To be fair, I think you should be very clear about the ground rules with your next jester."*

Once you were on base, Henderson said, the next step was taking a lead. Most players, he explained, mistakenly assume that you need a big lead. "That's one of Rickey's theories: Rickey takes only three steps from the bag," he said. "If you're taking a big lead, you're going to be all tense out there. Then everyone knows you're going. Just like you read the pitcher, the pitcher and catcher have read you."

He spread his legs again and pretended to stare at the pitcher. "O.K., you've taken your lead; now you're ready to find that one part of the pitcher's body that you already know tells you he's throwing home. The second you see the sign, then, *boom*, you're gone." He lifted his knees and dashed toward second base. After he stopped, he said, "I'll tell you another of Rickey's theories." Nearly all base stealers, he explained, begin their run by crossing their left foot in front of their right, as they turn their bodies toward second. That was also a mistake. "If you cross over, it forces you to stand straight up to get into your stride," he said. "That's the worst thing you can do as a runner. You want to start out low and explode."

As Henderson was conducting his demonstration, members of the opposing team arrived and began to look on. He said that the final touch was the slide. Before Henderson, the great base stealers typically went feet first. Henderson decided that it would be faster—not to mention more daring and stylish—to go in head first, the way Pete Rose, who was never a major base stealer, occasionally did. Yet each time Henderson tried the head-first slide he would bounce violently, brutally pounding his body. Then, one day, while he was flying to a game, he noticed that the pilot landed the plane in turbulence without a single bump. Henderson recalled, "I asked the pilot, I said, 'How the hell did you do that?' He said the key is coming in low to the ground, rather than dropping suddenly. I was, like, 'Dang. That's it!'" After that, Henderson said, he lowered his body gradually to the ground, like an airplane.

Henderson concluded by saying that if the base runner studied the pitcher, made a good jump, and slid well, he should beat the throw nearly every time. And, if for some reason he was caught, the moment he got back on base he should try to steal again. As Henderson put it to me, "To steal a base, you need to think you're invincible."

"Look at your head," the Surf Dawgs' hitting instructor said to Henderson one July afternoon. "You're dropping it down."

"I know it," Henderson said, stepping back in the batting cage. He took several more swings, but nothing seemed to be going right. "Come on, Rickey, you're better than this!" he yelled.

In July, his batting average had plunged from .311 to .247—one of the lowest on the team. (Recently, it climbed to .270.) In May, he hit only one home run; he had none in June. "He still sees the ball well," Kennedy, who was leaning against the cage, said of Henderson. "But he doesn't have the bat speed to get around."

After a dismal series against the Samurai Bears, an all-Japanese squad that had the worst record in the league, Henderson began staring at the ground in the outfield. Kennedy turned to his coaches and said, "I've think we've lost him."

Kennedy, believing that Henderson was ready to quit, later called him into his office. "I understand if you're through," Kennedy said.

"No, man, it's not that. It's just my damn hitting. I can't get it straight."

As the weeks wore on, it became clearer that the defiant mind-set that had made him a great base stealer had, in many ways, trapped him in the Golden Baseball League. He was forever convinced that he could do the impossible. "When I went to play with the Newark Bears, I was sure I would be there for only a few weeks—that a major-league team would call me," he said. "But one week became two weeks, and now it's two years and I'm still waiting for that call."

Trying to improve his average, he started to experiment with his trademark crouch; he stood straighter at the plate, until he was an almost unrecognizable figure. "I remember at the end of my career I began to doubt my ability," Kennedy said. "I knew what I wanted to do, but my body wouldn't let me do it. And I called my father and said, 'Dad, did you ever start to think you weren't good enough to play this game?' And he said, 'I did, and once you do you can never get it back.'"

During the game against the Scorpions in late July, after Henderson had singled and was on first, he got into his three-step lead. I had been travelling with the team periodically throughout the season, waiting to see him steal. The crowd implored him to run, and several times the pitcher threw to first to keep him close. "Here he goes!" a fan yelled. "Watch out!" But, when the pitcher went into his motion, Henderson didn't move. He stood there, frozen. "What's wrong, Rickey?" another fan yelled. "Can't you steal anymore?" On the next pitch, Henderson took his lead again and wiggled his fingers. The pitcher seemed to dip his shoulder when he was about to throw home—his tell—but Henderson didn't break. After several more pitches, the batter hit a ground ball to short and Henderson was easily thrown out at second. As Henderson returned to the dugout, he shouted, "Goddam cocksucking sun was in my eyes. I couldn't see a goddam motherfucking bullshit thing." He sat in the dugout with his head bowed, and for the first time since I had seen him play he didn't say a word.

Two weeks later, in the middle of August, as the Surf Dawgs' season was nearing its end, word spread in the clubhouse that the Oakland A's had just phoned about a player. Kennedy came out and told the team the good news: a Surf Dawg was being called up to Oakland's AAA farm team. It was Adam Johnson, the pitcher. Afterward, Henderson told me, "I'm happy to see one of the guys get out of the league, to get a chance to move on." He seemed genuinely glad for him and refused to mention his own circumstances. On another night on the field, however, he pointed to the Surf Dawg logo on his jersey and said, "I never thought I might end my career in this uniform." I asked if he would retire at the end of the season. "I don't know if I can keep going," he said. "I'm tired, you know." As he picked up his glove, he stared at the field for a moment. Then he said, "I just don't know if Rickey can stop." ♦

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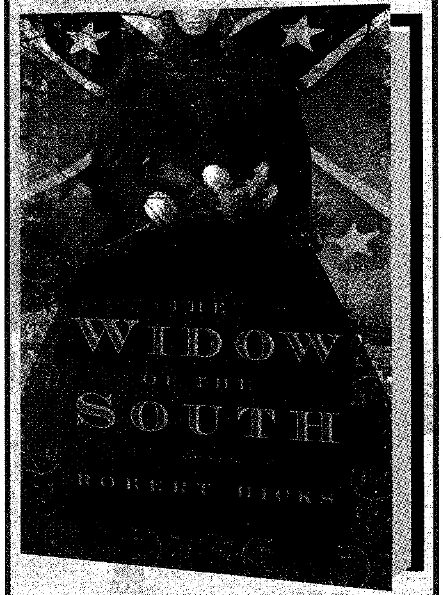

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### LETTER FROM SADDLEBACK

# THE CELLULAR CHURCH

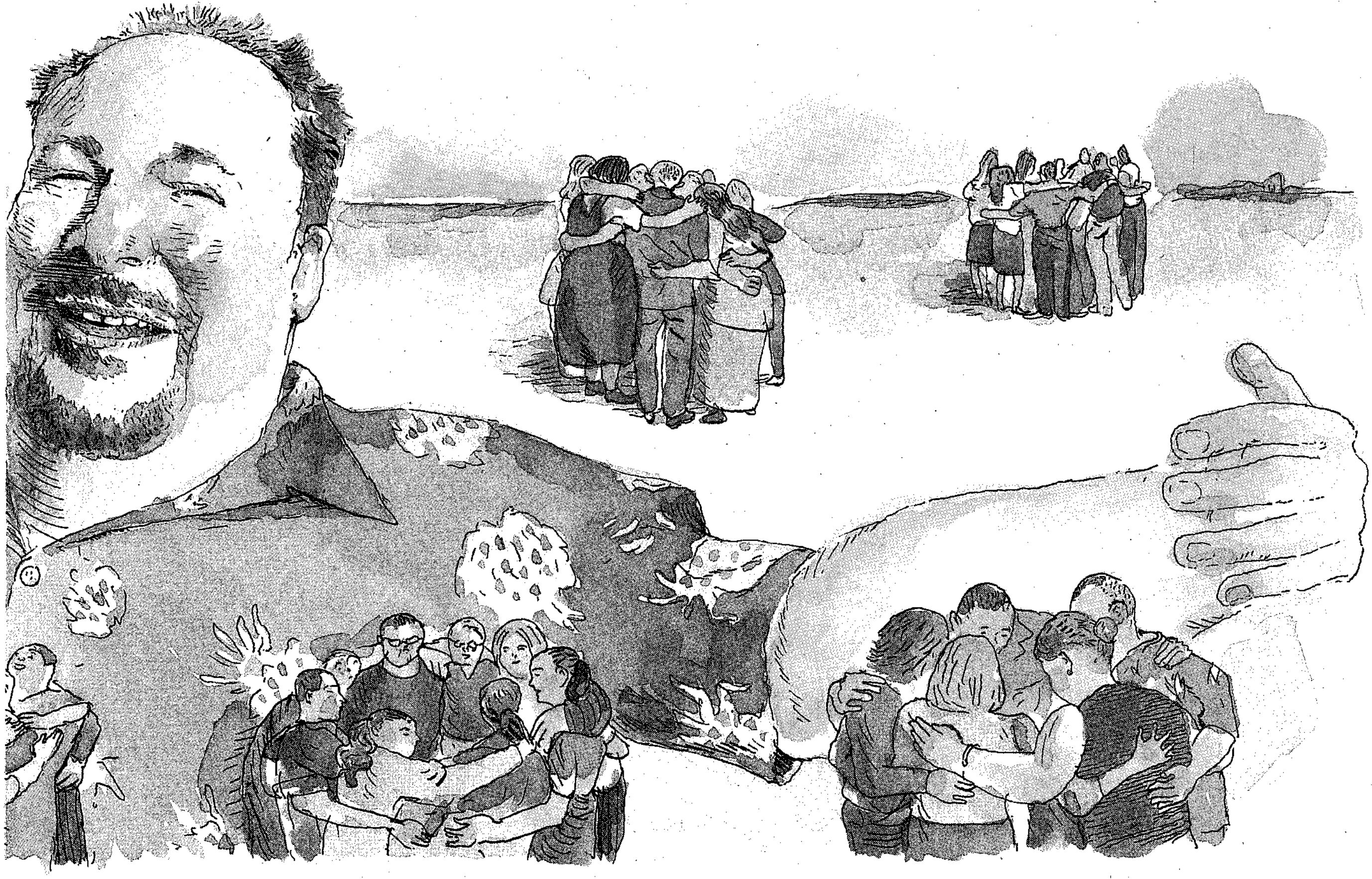
*How Rick Warren's congregation grew.*

### BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Saddleback Church, Rick Warren hired the Anaheim Angels' baseball stadium. He wanted to address his entire congregation at once, and there was no way to fit everyone in at Saddleback, where the crowds are spread across services held over the course of an entire weekend. So Warren booked the stadium and printed large, silver-black-and-white tickets, and, on a sunny Sunday morning last April, the tens of thousands of congregants of one of America's largest churches began to file into the stands. They were wearing shorts and T-shirts and buying Cokes and hamburgers from the concession stands, if they had not already tailgated in the parking lot. On the field, a rock band played loudly and enthusiastically. Just after one o'clock, a voice came over the public-address system—"RIIIICK WARRRREN"—and Warren bounded onto the stage, wearing black slacks, a red linen guayabera shirt, and wraparound NASCAR sunglasses. The congregants leaped to their feet.

"You know," Warren said, grabbing the microphone, "there are two things I've always wanted to do in a stadium." He turned his body sideways, playing an imaginary guitar, and belted out the first few lines of Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze." His image was up on the Jumbotrons in right and left fields, just below the Verizon and Pepsi and Budweiser logos. He stopped and grinned. "The other thing is, I want to do a wave!" He pointed to the bleachers, and then to the right-field seats, and around and around the stadium the congregation rose and fell, in four full circuits. "You are the most amazing church in America!" Warren shouted out, when they had finally finished. "AND I LOVE YOU!"

Rick Warren is a large man, with a generous stomach. He has short, spiky hair and a goatee. He looks like an ex-athlete, or someone who might have many tattoos. He is a hugger, enfolding those he meets in his long arms and saying things like "Hey, man." According to Warren, from sixth grade through college there wasn't a day in his life that he wasn't president of something, and that makes sense, because he's always the one at the center of the room talking or laughing, with his head tilted way back, or crying, which he does freely. In the evangelical tradition, preachers are hard or soft. Billy Graham, with his piercing eyes and protruding chin and Bible



clenched close to his chest, is hard. So was Martin Luther King, Jr., who overwhelmed his audience with his sonorous, forcefully enunciated cadences. Warren is soft. His sermons are conversational, delivered in a folksy, raspy voice. He talks about how he loves Krispy Kreme doughnuts, drives a four-year-old Ford, and favors loud Hawaiian shirts, even at the pulpit, because, he says, "they do not itch."

In December of 1979, when Warren was twenty-five years old, he and his wife, Kay, took their four-month-old baby and drove in a U-Haul from Texas to Saddleback Valley, in Orange County, because Warren had read that it was one of the fastest-growing counties in the country. He walked into the first real-estate office he found and introduced himself to the first agent he saw, a man named Don Dale. He was looking for somewhere to live, he said.

"Do you have any money to rent a house?" Dale asked.

"Not much, but we can borrow some," Warren replied.

"Do you have a job?"

"No. I don't have a job."

"What do you do for a living?"

"I'm a minister."

"So you have a church?"

"Not yet."

Dale found him an apartment that very day, of course: Warren is one of those people whose lives have an irresistible forward momentum. In the car on the way over, he recruited Dale as the first member of his still nonexistent church, of course. And when he held his first public service, three months later, he stood up in front of two hundred and five people he barely knew in a high-school gymnasium—this shiny-faced preacher fresh out of seminary—and told them that one day soon their new church would number twenty thousand people and occupy a campus of fifty acres. Today, Saddleback Church has twenty thousand members and occupies a campus of a hundred and twenty acres. Once, Warren wanted to increase the number of small groups at Saddleback—the groups of six or seven that meet for prayer and fellowship during the week—by three hundred. He went home and prayed and, as he tells it, God said to him that what he really needed to do was increase the number of small groups by three thousand, which is just what he did. Then, a few years ago, he wrote a book called "The Purpose-Driven Life," a genre of book that is known in the religious-publishing business as "Christian Living," and that typically sells thirty or forty thousand copies a year. Warren's publishers came to see him at Saddleback, and sat on the long leather couch in his office, and talked about their ideas for the book. "You guys don't understand," Warren told them. "This is a hundred-million-copy book." Warren remembers stunned silence: "Their jaws dropped." But now, nearly three years after its publication, "The Purpose-Driven Life" has sold twenty-three million copies. It is among the best-selling nonfiction hardcover books in American history. Neither the New York *Times*, the Los Angeles *Times*, nor the Washington *Post* has reviewed it. Warren's own publisher didn't see it coming. Only Warren had faith. "The best of the evangelical tradition is that you don't plan your way forward—you prophesy

*"The Purpose-Driven Life" has sold twenty-three million copies. Warren's publisher didn't see it coming; only he had faith.*

your way forward," the theologian Leonard Sweet says. "Rick's prophesying his way forward."

Not long after the Anaheim service, Warren went back to his office on the Saddleback campus. He put his feet up on the coffee table. On the wall in front of him were framed originals of the sermons of the nineteenth-century preacher Charles Spurgeon, and on the bookshelf next to him was his collection of hot sauces. "I had dinner with Jack Welch last Sunday night," he said. "He came to church, and we had dinner. I've been kind of mentoring him on his spiritual journey. And he said to me, 'Rick, you are the biggest thinker I have ever met in my life. The only other person I know who thinks globally like you is Rupert Murdoch.' And I said, 'That's interesting. I'm Rupert's pastor! Rupert published my book!'" Then he tilted back his head and gave one of those big Rick Warren laughs.

Churches, like any large voluntary organization, have at their core a contradiction. In order to attract newcomers, they must have low barriers to entry. They must be unintimidating, friendly, and compatible with the culture they are a part of. In order to retain their membership, however, they need to have an identity distinct from that culture. They need to give their followers a sense of community—and community, exclusivity, a distinct identity are all, inevitably, casualties of growth. As an economist would say, the bigger an organization becomes, the greater a free-rider problem it has. If I go to a church with five hundred members, in a magnificent cathedral, with spectacular services and music, why should I volunteer or donate any substantial share of my money? What kind of peer pressure is there in a congregation that large? If the barriers to entry become too low—and the ties among members become increasingly tenuous—then a church as it grows bigger becomes weaker.

One solution to the problem is simply not to grow, and, historically, churches have sacrificed size for community. But there is another approach: to create a church out of a network of lots of little church cells—exclusive, tightly knit groups of six or seven who meet in one another's homes during the week to worship and pray. The small group as an instrument of community is initially how Communism spread, and in the postwar years Alcoholics Anonymous and its twelve-step progeny perfected the small-group technique. The small group did not have a designated leader who stood at the front of the room. Members sat in a circle. The focus was on discussion and interaction—not one person teaching and the others listening—and the remarkable thing about these groups was their power. An alcoholic could lose his job and his family, he could be hospitalized, he could be warned by half a dozen doctors—and go on drinking. But put him in a room of his peers once a week—make him share the burdens of others and have his burdens shared by others—and he could do something that once seemed impossible.

*"My feelings about her continue to evolve."*

When churches—in particular, the megachurches that became the engine of the evangelical movement, in the nineteen-seventies and eighties—began to adopt the cellular model, they found out the same thing. The small group was an extraordinary vehicle of commitment. It was personal and flexible. It cost nothing. It was convenient, and every worshipper was able to find a small group that precisely matched his or her interests. Today, at least forty million Americans are in a religiously based small group, and the growing ranks of small-group membership have caused a profound shift in the nature of the American religious experience.

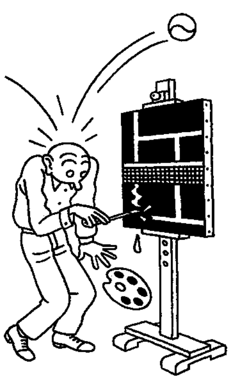
"As I see it, one of the most unfortunate misunderstandings of our time has been to think of small intentional communities as groups 'within' the church," the philosopher Dick Westley writes in one of the many books celebrating the rise of small-group power. "When are we going to have the courage to publicly proclaim what everyone with any experience with small groups has known all along: they are not organizations 'within' the church; they are church."

Ram Cnaan, a professor of social work at the University of Pennsylvania, recently estimated the replacement value of the charitable work done by the average American church—that is, the amount of money it would take to equal the time, money, and resources donated to the community by a typical congregation—and found that it came to about a hundred and forty thousand dollars a year. In the city of Philadelphia, for example, that works out to an annual total of two hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of community "good"; on a national scale, the contribution of religious groups to the public welfare is, as Cnaan puts it, "staggering." In the past twenty years, as the enthusiasm for publicly supported welfare has waned, churches have quietly and steadily stepped in to fill the gaps. And who are the churchgoers donating all that time and money? People in small groups. Membership in a small group is a better predictor of whether people volunteer or give money than how often they attend church, whether they pray, whether they've had a deep religious experience, or whether they were raised in a Christian home. Social action is not a consequence of belief, in other words. I don't give because I believe in religious charity. I give because I belong to a social structure that enforces an ethic of giving. "Small groups are networks," the Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow, who has studied the phenomenon closely, says. "They create bonds among people. Expose people to needs, provide opportunities for volunteering, and put people in harm's way of being asked to volunteer. That's not to say that being there for worship is not important. But, even in earlier research, I was finding that if people say all the right things about being a believer but aren't involved in some kind of physical social setting that generates interaction, they are just not as likely to volunteer."

Rick Warren came to the Saddleback Valley just as the small-group movement was taking off. He was the son of a preacher—a man who started seven churches in and around Northern California and was enough of a carpenter to have built a few dozen more with his own hands—and he wanted to do what his father had done: start a church from scratch.

For the first three months, he went from door to door in the neighborhood around his house, asking people why they didn't attend church. Churches were boring and irrelevant to everyday life, he was told. They were unfriendly to visitors. They were too interested in money. They had inadequate children's programs. So Warren decided that in his new church people would play and sing contemporary music, not hymns. (He could find no one, Warren likes to say, who listened to organ music in the car.) He would wear the casual clothes of his community. The sermons would be practical and funny and plainspoken, and he would use video and drama to illustrate his message. And when an actual church was finally built—Saddleback used seventy-nine different locations in its first thirteen years, from high-school auditoriums to movie theatres and then tents before building a permanent home—the church would not look *churchy:* no pews, or stained glass, or lofty spires. Saddleback looks like a college campus, and the main sanctuary looks like the school gymnasium. Parking is plentiful. The chairs are comfortable. There are loudspeakers and television screens everywhere broadcasting the worship service, and all the doors are open, so anyone can slip in or out, at any time, in the anonymity of the enormous crowds. Saddleback is a church with very low barriers to entry.

But beneath the surface is a network of thousands of committed small groups. "Orange County is virtually a desert in social-capital terms," the Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, who has taken a close look at the Saddleback success story, says. "The rate of mobility is really high. It has long and anonymous commutes. It's a very friendless place, and this church offers serious heavy friendship. It's a very interesting experience to talk to some of those groups. There were these eight people and they were all mountain bikers—mountain bikers for God. They go biking together, and they are one another's best friends. If one person's wife gets breast cancer, he can go to the others for support. If someone loses a job, the others are there for him. They are deeply best friends, in a larger social context where it is hard to find a best friend."



Putnam goes on, "Warren didn't invent the cellular church. But he's brought it to an amazing level of effectiveness. The real job of running Saddleback is the recruitment and training and retention of the thousands of volunteer leaders for all the small groups it has. That's the surprising thing to me—that they are able to manage that. Those small groups are incredibly vulnerable, and complicated to manage. How to keep all those little dinghies moving in the same direction is, organizationally, a major accomplishment."

At Saddleback, members are expected to tithe, and to volunteer. Sunday-school teachers receive special training and a police background check. Recently, Warren decided that Saddleback would feed every homeless person in Orange County three meals a day for forty days. Ninety-two hundred people volunteered. Two million pounds of food were collected, sorted, and distributed.

It may be easy to start going to Saddleback. But it is not easy to stay at Saddleback. "Last Sunday, we took a special offering called Extend the Vision, for people to give over and above their normal offering," Warren said. "We decided we would not use any financial consultants, no high-powered gimmicks, no thermometer on the wall. It was just 'Folks, you know you need to give.' Sunday's offering was seven million dollars in cash and fifty-three million dollars in commitments. That's one Sunday. The average commitment was fifteen thousand dollars a family. That's in *addition* to their tithe. When people say megachurches are shallow, I say you have no idea. These people are committed."

Warren's great talent is organizational. He's not a theological innovator. When he went from door to door, twenty-five years ago, he wasn't testing variants on the Christian message. As far as he was concerned, the content of his message was nonnegotiable. Theologically, Warren is a straight-down-the-middle evangelical. What he wanted to learn was how to construct an effective religious institution. His interest was sociological. Putnam compares Warren to entrepreneurs like Ray Kroc and Sam Walton, pioneers not in what they sold but in how they sold. The contemporary thinker Warren cites most often in conversation is the management guru Peter Drucker, who has been a close friend of his for years. Before Warren wrote "The Purpose-Driven Life," he wrote a book called "The Purpose-Driven Church," which was essentially a how-to guide for church builders. He's run hundreds of training seminars around the world for ministers of small-to-medium-sized churches. At the beginning of the Internet boom, he created a Web site called pastors.com, on which he posted his sermons for sale for four dollars each. There were many pastors in the world, he reasoned, who were part time. They had a second, nine-to-five job and families of their own, and what little free time they had was spent ministering to their congregation. Why not help them out with Sunday morning? The Web site now gets nearly four hundred thousand hits a day.

"I went to South Africa two years ago," Warren said. "We did the purpose-driven-church training, and we simulcast it to ninety thousand pastors across Africa. After it was over, I said, 'Take me out to a village and show me some churches.'"

In the first village they went to, the local pastor came out, saw Warren, and said, "I know who you are. You're Pastor Rick."

"And I said, 'How do you know who I am?'" Warren recalled. "He said, 'I get your sermons every week.' And I said, 'How? You don't even have electricity here.' And he said, 'We're putting the Internet in every post office in South Africa. Once a week, I walk an hour and a half down to the post office. I download it. Then I teach it. You are the only training I have ever received.'"

A typical evangelist, of course, would tell stories about reaching ordinary people, the unsaved laity. But a typical evangelist is someone who goes from town to town, giving sermons to large crowds, or preaching to a broad audience on television. Warren has never pastored any congregation but Saddleback, and he refuses to preach on television, because that would put him in direct competition with the local pastors he has spent the past twenty years cultivating. In the argot of the New Economy, most evangelists follow a business-to-consumer model: b-to-c. Warren follows a business-to-business model: b-to-b. He reaches the people who reach people. He's a builder of religious networks. "I once heard Drucker say this," Warren said. " 'Warren is not building a tent revival ministry, like the old-style evangelists. He's building an army, like the Jesuits.' "

To write "The Purpose-Driven Life," Warren holed up in an office in a corner of the Saddleback campus, twelve hours a day for seven months. "I would get up at four-thirty, arrive at my special office at five, and I would write from five to five," he said. "I'm a people person, and it about killed me to be alone by myself. By eleven-thirty, my A.D.D. would kick in. I would do anything not to be there. It was like birthing a baby." The book didn't tell any stories. It wasn't based on any groundbreaking new research or theory or theological insight. "I'm just not that good a writer," Warren said. "I'm a pastor. There's nothing new in this book. But sometimes as I was writing it I would break down in tears. I would be weeping, and I would feel like God was using me."

The book begins with an inscription: "This book is dedicated to you. Before you were born, God planned *this moment* in your life. It is no accident that you are holding this book. God *longs* for you to discover the life he created you to live—here on earth, and forever in eternity." Five sections follow, each detailing one of God's purposes in our lives—"You Were Planned for God's Pleasure"; "You Were Formed for God's Family"; "You Were Created to Become Like Christ"; "You Were Shaped for Serving God"; "You Were Made for a Mission"—and each of the sections, in turn, is divided into short chapters ("Understanding Your Shape" or "Using What God Gave You" or "How Real Servants Act"). The writing is simple and unadorned. The scriptural interpretation is literal: "Noah had never seen rain, because prior to the Flood, God irrigated the earth from the ground up." The religious vision is uncomplicated and accepting: "God wants to be your best friend." Warren's Christianity, like his church, has low barriers to entry: "Wherever you are reading this, I invite you to bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity. *Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you.* Go ahead. If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations! Welcome to the family of God! You are now ready to discover and start living God's purpose for your life."

It is tempting to interpret the book's message as a kind of New Age self-help theology. Warren's God is not awesome or angry and does not stand in judgment of human sin. He's genial and mellow. "Warren's God 'wants to be your best friend,' and this means, in turn, that God's most daunting property, the exercise of eternal judgment, is strategically downsized," the critic Chris Lehmann writes, echoing a common complaint:

> When Warren turns his utility-minded feel-speak upon the symbolic iconography of the faith, the results are offensively bathetic: "When Jesus stretched his arms wide on the cross, he was saying, 'I love you *this* much.' " But God needs to be at a greater remove than a group hug.

The self-help genre, however, is fundamentally inward-focussed. M. Scott Peck's "The Road Less Traveled"—the only spiritual work that, in terms of sales, can even come close to "The Purpose-Driven Life"—begins with the sentence "Life is difficult." That's a self-help book: it focusses the reader on his own experience. Warren's first sentence, by contrast, is "It's not about you," which puts it in the spirit of traditional Christian devotional literature, which focusses the reader outward, toward God. In look and feel, in fact, "The Purpose-Driven Life" is less twenty-first-century Orange County than it is the nineteenth century of Warren's hero, the English evangelist Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon was the Warren of his day: the pastor of a large church in London, and the author of best-selling devotional books. On Sunday, good Christians could go and hear Spurgeon preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. But during the week they needed something to replace the preacher, and so Spurgeon, in one of his best-known books, "Morning and Evening," wrote seven hundred and thirty-two short homilies, to be read in the morning and the evening of each day of the year. The homilies are not complex investigations of theology. They are opportunities for spiritual reflection. (Sample Spurgeonism: "Every child of God is where God has placed him for some purpose, and the practical use of this first point is to lead you to inquire for what practical purpose has God placed each one of you where you now are." Sound familiar?) The Oxford *Times* described one of Spurgeon's books as "a rich store of topics treated daintily, with broad humour, with quaint good sense, yet always with a subdued tone and high moral aim," and that describes "The Purpose-Driven Life" as well. It's a spiritual companion. And, like "Morning and Evening," it is less a book than a program. It's divided into forty chapters, to be read during "Forty Days of Purpose." The first page of the book is called "My Covenant." It reads, "With God's help, I commit the next 40 days of my life to discovering God's purpose for my life."

Warren departs from Spurgeon, though, in his emphasis on the purpose-driven life as a collective experience. Below the boxed covenant is a space for not

*"I'm back in my thin pants again."*

• •

one signature but three: "Your name," "Partner's name," and then Rick Warren's signature, already printed, followed by a quotation from Ecclesiastes 4:9:

> Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. . . . Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.

"The Purpose-Driven Life" is meant to be read in groups. If the vision of faith sometimes seems skimpy, that's because the book is supposed to be supplemented by a layer of discussion and reflection and debate. It is a testament to Warren's intuitive understanding of how small groups work that this is precisely how "The Purpose-Driven Life" has been used. It spread along the network that he has spent his career putting together, not from person to person but from group to group. It presold five hundred thousand copies. It averaged more than half a million copies in sales *a month* in its first two years, which is possible only when a book is being bought in lots of fifty or a hundred or two hundred. Of those who bought the book as individuals, nearly half have bought more than one copy, sixteen per cent have bought four to six copies, and seven per cent have bought ten or more. Twenty-five thousand churches have now participated in the congregation-wide "40 Days of Purpose" campaign, as have hundreds of small groups within companies and organizations, from the N.B.A. to the United States Postal Service.

"I remember the first time I met Rick," says Scott Bolinder, the head of Zondervan, the Christian publishing division of HarperCollins and the publisher of "The Purpose-Driven Life." "He was telling me about pastors.com. This is during the height of the dot-com boom. I was thinking, What's your angle? He had no angle. He said, 'I love pastors. I know what they go through.' I said, 'What do you put on there?' He said, 'I put my sermons with a little disclaimer on there: "You are welcome to preach it any way you can. I only ask one thing—I ask that you do it better than I did."' So then fast-forward seven years: he's got hundreds of thousands of pastors who come to this Web site. And he goes, 'By the way, my church and I are getting ready to do forty days of purpose. If you want to join us, I'm going to preach through this and put my sermons up. And I've arranged with my publisher that if you do join us with this campaign they will sell the book to you for a low price.' That became the tipping point—being able to launch that book with eleven hundred churches, right from the get-go. They became the evangelists for the book."

The book's high-water mark came earlier this year, when a fugitive named Brian Nichols, who had shot and killed four people in an Atlanta courthouse, accosted a young single mother, Ashley Smith, outside her apartment, and held her captive in her home for seven hours.

"I asked him if I could read," Smith said at the press conference after her ordeal was over, and so she went and got her copy of "The Purpose-Driven Life" and turned to the chapter she was reading that day. It was Chapter 33, "How Real Servants Act." It begins:

> We serve God by serving others.
>
> The world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, and position. If you can demand service from others, you've arrived. In our self-serving culture with its *me-first* mentality, acting like a servant is not a popular concept.
>
> Jesus, however, measured greatness in terms of service, not status. God determines your greatness by how many people you serve, not how many people serve you.

Nichols listened and said, "Stop. Will you read it again?"

Smith read it to him again.

They talked throughout the night. She made him pancakes. "I said, 'Do you believe in miracles? Because if you don't believe in miracles—you are here for a reason. You're here in my apartment for some reason.'" She might as well have been quoting from "The Purpose-Driven Life." She went on, "You don't think you're supposed to be sitting here right in front of me listening to me tell you, you know, your reason for being here?" When morning came, Nichols let her go.

Hollywood could not have scripted a better testimonial for "The Purpose-Driven Life." Warren's sales soared further. But the real lesson of that improbable story is that it wasn't improbable at all. What are the odds that a young Christian—a woman who, it turns out, sends her daughter to Hebron Church, in Dacula, Georgia—*isn't* reading "The Purpose-Driven Life"? And is it surprising that Ashley Smith would feel compelled to read aloud from the book to her captor, and that, in the discussion that followed, Nichols would come to some larger perspective on his situation? She and Nichols were in a small group, and reading aloud from "The Purpose-Driven Life" is what small groups do.

### THE WATER

In the morning the water like a deckhand,
a persistent curl against the shore,

who won't back down, take no, or be denied.
It is there under the wharf and soon under

the house, whoring with any swamp rat
or snake. It rings cypress knees with pearls—

it dreams under the sun like a cut cane,
throwing back the salt you wash away,

then wearing pilings down to air.
Your houses wade on cryptic pillars,

their sheet-metal skulls bared to a mildewed
sky. Against the fallen trees rain and lapping

tide meet, slapping of nets and fish and
naked children pulling driftwood boats

in one joyful noise around your sleep.
In the afternoon the water is there, only more,

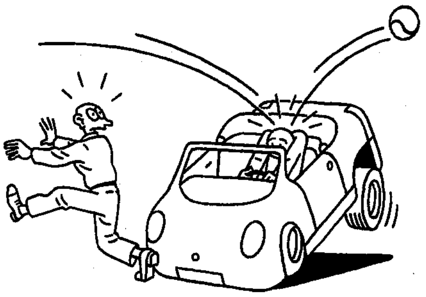
browner and grayer, no sweeping seaweed or foam,
just its presence farther up your shore,

like a dull brother-in-law in front of TV.

Not long ago, the sociologist Christian Smith decided to find out what American evangelicals mean when they say that they believe in a "Christian America." The phrase seems to suggest that evangelicals intend to erode the separation of church and state. But when Smith asked a representative sample of evangelicals to explain the meaning of the phrase, the most frequent explanation was that America was founded by people who sought religious liberty and worked to establish religious freedom. The second most frequent explanation offered was that a majority of Americans of earlier generations were sincere Christians, which, as Smith points out, is empirically true. Others said what they meant by a Christian nation was that the basic laws of American government reflected Christian principles—which sounds potentially theocratic, except that when Smith asked his respondents to specify what they meant by basic laws they came up with representative government and the balance of powers.

"In other words," Smith writes, "the belief that America was once a Christian nation does not necessarily mean a commitment to making it a 'Christian' nation today, whatever that might mean. Some evangelicals do make this connection explicitly. But many discuss America's Christian heritage as a simple fact of history that they are not particularly interested in or optimistic about reclaiming. Further, some evangelicals think America never was a Christian nation; some think it still is; and others think it should not be a Christian nation, whether or not it was so in the past or is now."

As Smith explored one issue after another with the evangelicals—gender equality, education, pluralism, and politics—he found the same scattershot pattern. The Republican Party may have been adept at winning the support of evangelical voters, but that affinity appears to be as much cultural as anything; the Party has learned to speak the evangelical language. Scratch the surface, and the appearance of homogeneity and ideological consistency disappears. Evangelicals want children to have the right to pray in school, for example, and they vote for conservative Republicans who support that right. But what do they mean by prayer? The New Testament's most left-liberal text, the Lord's Prayer—which, it should be pointed out, begins with a call for utopian social restructuring ("Thy will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven"), then welfare relief ("Give us this day our daily bread"), and then income redistribution ("Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"). The evangelical movement isn't a movement, if you take movements to be characterized by a coherent philosophy, and that's hardly surprising when you think of the role that small groups have come to play in the evangelical religious experience. The answers that Smith got to his questions are the kind of answers you would expect from people who think most deeply about their faith and its implications on Tuesday night, or Wednesday, with five or six of their closest friends, and not Sunday morning, in the controlling hands of a pastor.



"Small groups cultivate spirituality, but it is a *particular kind* of spirituality," Robert Wuthnow writes. "They cannot be expected to nurture faith in the same way that years of theological study, meditation and reflection might." He says, "They provide ways of putting faith in practice. For the most part, their focus is on practical applications, not on abstract knowledge, or even on ideas for the sake of ideas themselves."

We are so accustomed to judging a social movement by its ideological coherence that the vagueness at the heart of evangelicalism sounds like a shortcom-

He means something to somebody—

but not to you, not just now. Its slow wake seems
harmless, the litany of waves before a storm

rolling benignly ashore. Intoxicating!
And then it is there, all gray length of it,

rich sex of it, it wants you so badly,
it pounds at the door, *Let me take*

*your smallness, your jetties, your broad*
*coasts, your loam.* It gathers

at night beyond the curtain of mosquitoes,
darker than the shut-down sky,

the boarded-up clouds. Its desire
thrums like an idling outboard. Ignore

it, and it tows itself into your dreams. It's
everywhere, every chance, all the time.

It is more certain than death or love.
It must have been conceived by death and love.

When the last silt sinks under your feet,
you will have to walk out on this water.

—*Martha Serpas*

ing. Peter Drucker calls Warren's network an army, like the Jesuits. But the Jesuits marched in lockstep and held to an all-encompassing and centrally controlled creed. The members of Warren's network don't all dress the same, and they march to the tune only of their own small group, and they agree, fundamentally, only on who the enemy is. It's not an army. It's an insurgency.

In the wake of the extraordinary success of "The Purpose-Driven Life," Warren says, he underwent a period of soul-searching. He had suddenly been given enormous wealth and influence and he did not know what he was supposed to do with it. "God led me to Psalm 72, which is Solomon's prayer for more influence," Warren says. "It sounds pretty selfish. Solomon is already the wisest and wealthiest man in the world. He's the King of Israel at the apex of its glory. And in that psalm he says, 'God, I want you to make me more powerful and influential.' It looks selfish until he says, 'So that the King may support the widow and orphan, care for the poor, defend the defenseless, speak up for the immigrant, the foreigner, be a friend to those in prison.' Out of that psalm, God said to me that the purpose of influence is to speak up for those who have no influence. That changed my life. I had to repent. I said, I'm sorry, widows and orphans have not been on my radar. I live in Orange County. I live in the Saddleback Valley, which is all gated communities. There aren't any homeless people around. They are thirteen miles away, in Santa Ana, not here." He gestured toward the rolling green hills outside. "I started reading through Scripture. I said, How did I miss the two thousand verses on the poor in the Bible? So I said, I will use whatever affluence and influence that you give me to help those who are marginalized."

He and his wife, Kay, decided to reverse tithe, giving away ninety per cent of the tens of millions of dollars they earned from "The Purpose-Driven Life." They sat down with gay community leaders to talk about fighting AIDS. Warren has made repeated trips to Africa. He has sent out volunteers to forty-seven countries around the world, test-piloting experiments in microfinance and H.I.V. prevention and medical education. He decided to take the same networks he had built to train pastors and spread the purpose-driven life and put them to work on social problems.

"There is only one thing big enough to handle the world's problems, and that is the millions and millions of churches spread out around the world," he says. "I can take you to thousands of villages where they don't have a school. They don't have a grocery store, don't have a fire department. But they have a church. They have a pastor. They have volunteers. The problem today is distribution. In the tsunami, millions of dollars of foodstuffs piled up on the shores and people couldn't get it into the places that needed it, because they didn't have a network. Well, the biggest distribution network in the world is local churches. There are millions of them, far more than all the franchises in the world. Put together, they could be a force for good."

That is, in one sense, a typical Warren pronouncement—bold to the point of audacity, like telling his publisher that his book will sell a hundred million copies. In another sense, it is profoundly modest. When Warren's nineteenth-century evangelical predecessors took on the fight against slavery, they brought to bear every legal, political, and economic lever they could get their hands on. But that was a different time, and that was a different church. Today's evangelicalism is a network, and networks, for better or worse, are informal and personal.

At the Anaheim stadium service, Warren laid out his plan for attacking poverty and disease. He didn't talk about governments, though, or the United Nations, or structures, or laws. He talked about the pastors he had met in his travels around the world. He brought out the President of Rwanda, who stood up at the microphone—a short, slender man in an immaculate black suit—and spoke in halting English about how Warren was helping him rebuild his country. When he was finished, the crowd erupted in applause, and Rick Warren walked across the stage and enfolded him in his long arms. ♦

### A REPORTER AT LARGE

# PECULIAR INSTITUTIONS

*Brown University looks at the slave traders in its past.*

### BY FRANCES FITZGERALD

On May 14, 1770, John Brown laid the foundation stone for Rhode Island College, on a hill overlooking Providence and Narragansett Bay. According to the Providence *Gazette*, "a Number of Gentlemen, Friends to the Institution," attended the ceremony, and, as tradition has it, Brown treated them to punch. He and his brothers—Nicholas, Joseph, and Moses—had reason to celebrate that day. All four had worked hard to establish the college, later known as Brown University.

The Browns themselves had no formal education. They were Baptists—their great-great-grandfather Chad Brown had been baptized by Roger Williams soon after Brown's arrival in Providence, in 1638—and, until their generation, Baptists had regarded Biblical and classical learning as no more than obstacles to the direct experience of God. The brothers, like their forebears, and like most people in their largely Baptist town, had gone to work at around the age of fourteen. Their father, Captain James Brown, died in 1739, when Moses, the youngest, was less than a year old, and they learned their trade from their merchant uncle, Obadiah. Brought up on the wharves and amid the stench of Obadiah's spermaceti-candle works, they succeeded where many failed in the risky world of maritime trade, whaling, privateering, and small manufacturing. Ambitious, farsighted, and hardworking, the brothers were not only building a mercantile empire but also turning Providence into a major seaport, and, in the process, challenging Newport's commercial and political supremacy in the colony. Along with a number of other merchants and Stephen Hopkins, a governor of the colony and Providence's political champion, they believed that education was the key to the future.

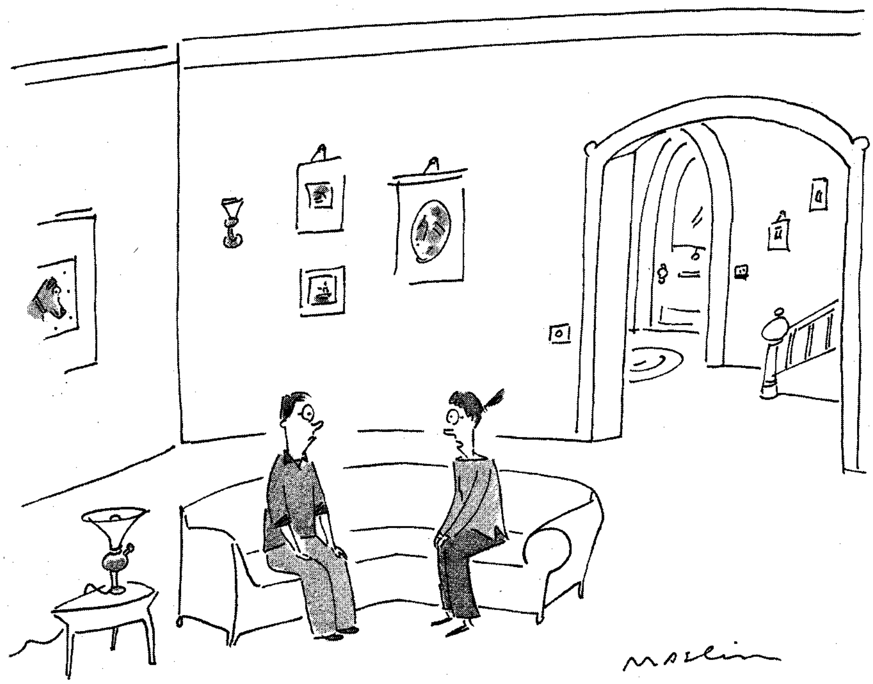
The Brown brothers raised the money for the college, and the family firm, Nicholas Brown & Company, took charge of constructing the College Edifice, which is today University Hall, the main administrative building. The Edifice was fashioned after Nassau Hall, at Princeton University, where the Reverend James Manning, a Baptist minister who was the founder and the first president of Rhode Island College, had studied. Both its design and its scale—four stories and fifty-six rooms—suggest the ambitions that Manning and the Browns had for the college. According to the records, the building committee hired a variety of laborers for different periods of time. A few were listed as "Negro." At least three of them, and perhaps four, were slaves.

On November 9, 2000, Ruth J. Simmons was elected the eighteenth president of Brown University by its trustees. Announcing the decision at a press conference, Brown's chancellor, Stephen Robert, pointed out that the election made her the first African-American to become president of an Ivy League institution. "This is a historic occasion," he said. Robert praised Simmons's accomplishments as the president of Smith College, where she had established an engineering program, increased the number of minority students, launched several new building projects, and doubled the college's endowment. "She is truly beloved by faculty, students, and staff at Smith," he said, "and we have every reason to believe she will be a star at Brown." Simmons thanked the Chancellor and said, "It's very hard for me to explain what's going through my mind and through my heart right now. It would be impossible for you to understand, because you don't know my personal circumstances yet. But, when I was told I had been elected this afternoon as president of Brown, I said my ancestors were smiling."

Simmons often talks about her past. She was born in 1945, the twelfth child of sharecroppers on a farm near the town of Grapeland, in East Texas. During the press conference, she recalled that her first day of kindergarten was "magical," because "here was a place that was bright and orderly, and something terrific happened there. I could have a pencil and paper; I could have books to read." When she was a little older, the family moved to Houston, where her father found work in a factory and her mother cleaned houses for white families. They lived in the Fifth Ward, which she remembered as "a very impoverished area of Houston just in the shadow of the downtown skyscrapers" and "brutally segregated." As a child, she knew no one who had been to college, but, with support from her family and her teachers, she went to Dillard, a historically black university in New Orleans.

Simmons usually speaks about her background in the context of how education can transform the lives of poor and minority children. After graduating summa cum laude from Dillard, she went to Harvard and earned a Ph.D. in Romance languages and literature. She studied in France on a Fulbright scholarship, then taught French at the University of New Orleans, where she became an assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts. There and at the University of Southern California, in the early eighties, she found her vocation as an academic administrator. In 1983, she was hired as director of studies for one of Princeton's residential colleges. "Frankly, it was affirmative-action-driven," a former university officer said. "There were hundreds of applicants and she got a second look. Then she clicked immediately." Two years later, she was brought into central administration, in Nassau Hall. The move

*Ruth Simmons, the university's president, launched a study of the Brown family business. Photograph by Steve Pyke.*



*"I think we should stop fooling ourselves and begin fooling other people."*

• •

turned out to be an important one for Princeton, and a turning point in Simmons's career. Charged with strengthening the African-American Studies program, she recruited Toni Morrison, Cornel West, and a number of other stars, making Princeton's program the most dazzling in the Ivy League. She became associate dean of the faculty in 1987, spent two years as the provost of Spelman College, in Atlanta, then returned to Princeton as vice-provost in charge of the budget. By 1995, she had a thorough education in university governance and was regarded as a comer in her field.

Though not tall or svelte, Simmons holds herself regally. Her accent is mid-Atlantic, and she speaks with precision, in full paragraphs. She has two grown children from a marriage that ended sixteen years ago, and in photographs, smiling broadly with a hint of humor in her eyes, she looks ready to embrace the world and to mother everyone in it. Still, in her presence people tend to feel that they will have to pass a test or two to earn an embrace. She is so direct, so articulate, and so obviously in command that she inspires respect, even fear. Johnnetta Cole, a former president of Spelman, says that as a friend Simmons is warm and open and loves to laugh, but she concedes that this is not the way most people see her when she's on the job. Those who have worked with Simmons describe the qualities that distinguish her with remarkable consistency. "Drive, ambition, and focussed energy," a Princeton administrator said. Two Brown trustees—both men—used exactly the same words. "She's always working," one added. "I've learned a great deal about determination from her." Simmons is notoriously hard on her subordinates—their feelings don't really interest her. Yet she has certain well-honed political skills: she knows whom to consult; she chooses her battles; and she carefully builds support.

When Simmons took office at Brown, in July, 2001, the university had gone through almost four years of uncertainty and drift. In 1997, Vartan Gregorian, a man of sparkling intellect and a world-class charmer, had stepped down from the presidency after eight years. Taking, as trustees often do, the opposite tack, the Corporation—as Brown's board is called—replaced him with Gordon Gee, the president of Ohio State University and a skilled manager. But, after two years, Gee, declaring that the "fit" was wrong, quit to become chancellor of Vanderbilt University. For the next two years, Brown had an acting president, and no major initiatives could be undertaken. Still, the trustees felt that Brown remained strong and competitive with the other Ivy League colleges and universities. As it turned out, this was not the case. On her arrival, Simmons conducted a thorough review of the state of the university and discovered that Brown was falling behind its peer institutions in a number of ways. It had, for example, the second-highest student-faculty ratio in the Ivy League; its faculty salaries were fifteen to twenty-five per cent lower than those of similar schools; too much of its money came from undergraduate tuition; and it had the smallest endowment in the Ivy League.

Some months later, Simmons went back to the trustees with the elements of a comprehensive renewal program. The plan eventually included the adoption of need-blind admissions, which all the other Ivy League schools had already instituted; the establishment of at least a hundred new faculty positions within eight years, and an increase in faculty salaries; the construction of major new research facilities in the biological sciences and a new building for the medical school; the creation of a series of multidisciplinary centers; the renovation of undergraduate living quarters; and a major investment in library and computing facilities. To fund this program, Simmons proposed a general campaign to raise approximately $1.3 billion—a sum equal to Brown's entire endowment—in the next six to eight years. After that, she warned, the university would have to remain in permanent fund-raising mode.

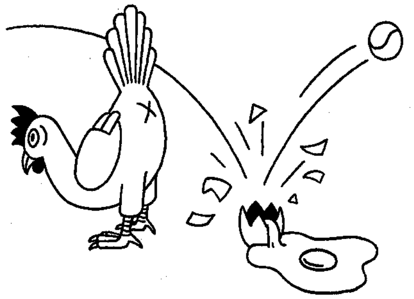
Simmons told me that the trustees were initially shocked by her proposals. "I think what surprised them was that I was saying a lot of things they thought suggested they had not kept watch in the way that they should have," she said. A couple of the trustees I talked with admitted that they were surprised. "We knew we were underinvested," one said, "but we had no idea of the magnitude of what had to be done." But the trustees were soon convinced that the program represented their own ambitions for the university, and that Simmons could get the job done. By the spring of 2003, Simmons's program was well under way, and she had decided what to do about a question that she had felt it was important to address ever since she arrived: that of the historic ties of the university to slavery and the slave trade.

Boston has its Adamses, Cabots, and Lowells, but perhaps only in Providence has a single family held the preëminent position that the Browns held for more than two centuries. Few Browns live in Providence today, but the family remains a presence in the monuments on the hill overlooking the bay, among them the university; the Nightingale-Brown mansion, which the university now owns; the John Carter Brown Library; and the John Brown house, a Rhode Island Historical Society museum. In Providence, many people believe that the Browns made their fortune in the slave trade, and that John Brown, who laid the foundation stone for the college, was one of the biggest slave traders of his day. Many, including some university professors, believe that Market Square, by the Providence River, was a slave market where the Browns sold human cargo. And many more believe that the Brown mansions had tunnels through which slaves were herded in secret from the wharves below. This last belief is so powerful that when workmen cleared out the basement of the Nightingale-Brown house some years ago, a crew from a local TV station showed up to film the opening of its passageway. The university curator, Professor Robert Emlen, showed the crew that the eighteenth-century walls were solid and had no openings in them, but that evening the station's newscaster remarked that it was amazing that after all those years people were still trying to hide the tunnels. These legends say a great deal about the historical imagination. The story of the underground passageways could stand as a metaphor for the burial of the history of slavery and the slave trade in Rhode Island. In these legends, the Browns have become a synecdoche for all that has been forgotten.

Slaves were a part of the fabric of life in pre-Revolutionary New England, and in the seventeen-seventies Rhode Island had more slaves per capita than any other New England colony. According to the 1774 census, 3,761 people—6.3 per cent of Rhode Island's population—were "Negroes," and it can be assumed that most of them were enslaved. As Emlen told the TV reporter, the Browns would have had no need for underground passageways, because slavery was no secret. Most well-to-do people in the town had one or more slaves working in their household. Wealthy farmers and merchants typically had a few slaves, as well as indentured servants, working on their farms, on their ships, or in their manufactories.

Slavery played a smaller role in the economy of New England than it did in that of New York and most other colonies, but New Englanders controlled the American slave trade. New England did much of the shipping for the country, and in the eighteenth century its merchants carried on most of their external trade with the slaveholding colonies of the West Indies, selling lumber and other local products for sugar and molasses, some of which would be distilled into rum. A number of successful merchants added a third leg to the trade: they sent ships filled with rum and other stores to the west coast of Africa, and sold their cargoes for enslaved Africans; the ships then recrossed the Atlantic and sold the Africans in the West Indies for sugar, molasses, and hard currency.

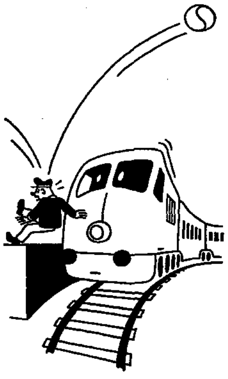
The New England Triangle Trade appears in most high-school history texts, but few people, even in Rhode Island, know that Rhode Island was the hub of the trade—its economy being the most heavily dependent on shipping and the sale of rum. According to Professor Jay Coughtry, a historian at the University of Nevada, who in the nineteen-seventies made a careful study of the shipping records, Rhode Island merchants controlled sixty to ninety per cent of the American slave trade throughout the eighteenth century. In a period of seventy-five years, more than nine hundred ships left Rhode Island for ports in Africa and brought back more than a hundred thousand slaves. Rhode Island was a small carrier compared with the European sea powers, but by the seventeen-thirties Rhode Island merchants were shipping more slaves than their Massachusetts counterparts, and by the end of the century they had almost no American competitors. In the half century before the American Revolution, Newport virtually monopolized the Rhode Island trade, sending out all but twenty-one of five hundred and thirteen slaving ships. Providence sent out nine slavers, and Nicholas Brown & Company one. However, the voyage of the Browns' ship appears in many histories of the American slave trade, because, like most of the Browns' business transactions, it was extremely well documented, and the records have survived.



In 1764, the Brown brothers outfitted an eleven-ton brigantine, the Sally, for a voyage to what was then known as the Guinea Coast of Africa. They were planning to build an iron furnace near the village of Hope, about twelve miles west of Providence, and they needed to raise the capital. Captain James Brown had sent out a slaver in 1736, and twenty-three years later Obadiah had sent out a ship that was lost off Africa, but the brothers had no experience in the trade. To captain the Sally, they chose Stephen Hopkins's younger brother, Esek, who had sailed their privateers with success but had never been to the Guinea Coast. The ship left port in September, with a crew of eleven and a cargo of rum, tobacco, and other goods. She also carried seven swivel guns, an assortment of small arms, thirteen cutlasses, forty shackles, and three chains. Hopkins, faithfully writing down his day-to-day transactions in his trade book, left a record of one of the most horrifying of all slaving voyages.

The Sally arrived on the Guinea Coast in early November, 1764, and did not leave until the following August. The Seven Years' War and British-

French hostilities in the Atlantic had just ended, so numerous slavers, including twenty-six from Rhode Island, made their way to the Guinea Coast that year, and, because the Sally came late in the season, slaves were in short supply. The tribal chiefs with whom Hopkins dealt asked for goods that the Sally did not carry, so he had to sail up and down the coast looking for British ships that would take his rum and tobacco in return for the Manchester cloth and the pig iron that the chiefs wanted. Even then, he sometimes could not buy more than one or two slaves at a time. When he finally set sail for the West Indies, many of the slaves he had bought had already spent months on the ship, and twenty of them had died, among them a woman who hanged herself between decks.



Around August 20th, Hopkins set his course through the middle passage with a hundred and sixty-seven slaves aboard. In the first few days of the voyage, four slaves died. Then, days later, he released a few slaves to help out on deck. He wrote, "Slaves Rose on us, was obliged to fire on them and Destroyed 8 and Several more wounded badly 1 Thye & ones Ribs broke." Throughout September, as the ship crossed the Atlantic, deaths were an almost daily occurrence. In a letter to the Browns, Hopkins wrote that after the failure of the uprising the surviving Negroes were "so disperited" that "some drowned themselves, some starved and others sickened and died." By the time the Sally reached Barbados, in early October, eighty-eight slaves were dead, and the rest were, Hopkins wrote, in a "very sickly and disordered manner." As the ship sailed from Barbados to Antigua, more people died, and by December, 1765, the death toll had reached a hundred and nine. Hopkins managed to sell twenty-four "verry Indifferent" slaves to a merchant in Antigua. His trade book does not record what became of the remaining Africans.

The Brown brothers, from the evidence of their letters, seem to have taken the news of the disaster calmly. In October, they wrote Hopkins, "We need not mention how Disagreeable the Nuse of your Luseing 88 Slaves is to us & all your Friends, but your Self Continuing in Helth is so Grate Satisfaction to us, that we Remain Cheirful under the Heavy Loss of our Ints." All the same, the ill-fated voyage seems to have made a strong impression on three of the four brothers. Nicholas told his captains afterward to avoid the Guinea trade, and he, Joseph, and Moses never participated in a slaving voyage again. Only John continued to send out slavers, and after the Revolution he became Rhode Island's most vocal defender of the trade. Moses became one of the leading abolitionists in New England, and his brother's most persistent opponent. He helped found a society to combat the slave trade whose members included the Reverend James Manning, the president of Rhode Island College, and Nicholas's son, Nicholas, after whom the college was renamed.

Ruth Simmons's interest in the eighteenth-century Browns had its origin in current events. In the year of her appointment as president, a small but influential group of black intellectuals and lawyers began making a case that the federal government, as well as states and private institutions with historic ties to slavery, should pay reparations for the sins of the past. Among them were Randall Robinson, a leader in the campaign for divestment from apartheid South Africa; Charles Ogletree, a Harvard Law School professor; Alexander Pires, Jr., a Washington lawyer who had won a billion-dollar settlement from the Department of Agriculture for discriminating against black farmers in recent decades; and the defense attorney Johnnie Cochran. They claimed that the promises of Reconstruction had never been fulfilled and that affirmative-action and anti-poverty programs had failed to erase institutionalized discrimination and inner-city poverty. Reparations had been paid to Holocaust survivors, to Japanese-Americans interned during the Second World War, and to Native Americans, so, they reasoned, those who still suffered the aftereffects of slavery should also be compensated. By 2001, their arguments had gained currency, and city councils in Cleveland, Chicago, Dallas, and Washington, D.C., passed resolutions calling for a federal commission to study the problems of the inner cities and to consider remedies. Conservative black intellectuals attacked the idea, and debates erupted on college campuses.

Meanwhile, reparations-movement lawyers discussed strategies for suing public and private institutions that had benefitted from slavery. In 2002, a class-action suit was filed against FleetBoston, Aetna, and other corporations, charging that their predecessor companies had conspired with slave traders to "illicitly profit from slave labor." The petitioners asked for a full restitution of all moneys derived from slave labor, and the sum of a trillion dollars was mentioned. Brown was cited in the suit, along with Harvard and Yale, as a celebrated university that had its "origins in profits derived from the slave trade"—a reflection of the fact that some in the reparations movement thought that universities could also be sued.

Simmons had paid some attention to the debate when she was at Smith. After she was named president of Brown, alumni and others often asked whether the university was founded by slave traders, and she did not know the answer. She had heard reparations activists claim that it was, but the official short history of Brown, republished in 2000, said nothing about slavery except that James Manning had freed his only slave in 1770. Then, on March 13, 2001, a few months before she took office, the student newspaper, the *Brown Daily Herald*, printed a full-page ad listing "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery Is a Bad Idea—and Racist, Too." The ad, written by David Horowitz, a conservative provocateur, argued that slavery had occurred long ago, that it had been abolished by white Christians, and that black Americans should be grateful for the freedom and prosperity they had as a result of their removal to the United States. Angry students converged on the *Herald* office and demanded space for a rebuttal; a few days later, after their demands were not met, they made off with the entire press run of the next day's paper. Horowitz, who was building a case about politically correct censorship on campus—and who had sent the ad to dozens of college newspapers—felt that his point was made. He accused the protesters of censoring conservative ideas, and a general shouting match ensued.

Simmons took office in July, and in September she gave her first speech to the students, on the importance of free expression in a university. But she felt that more had to be done. Three Yale graduate students had recently published a detailed account of Yale's historic connections to slavery, showing that a slave owner had endowed the university's first scholarships and that Yale had taken slave-trading money for its first endowed professorship and one of its first libraries. Simmons and others in the administration thought that Brown scholars should do likewise—get the facts out and clear the air. She also thought that Brown should take up the issue of reparations. "I was intrigued by the idea that we could replay the campus incident in a more fruitful way," Simmons told me. "Universities are good at addressing even the most psychologically difficult issues, so I thought we could expose it to the time-honored academic methods."

She first had to turn her attention to reviewing the state of the university and to developing a renewal program. But in April, 2003, she appointed a steering committee to look into the history of Brown's connection to slavery and to explore the issue of reparations for slavery in comparative contexts, such as the Holocaust, the internment of Japanese-Americans, and apartheid in South Africa. The committee, made up of thirteen faculty members and three students, took until the late fall to plan its work, at which time exams and holidays intervened. In February, 2004, Simmons discussed the committee with the Brown trustees, and they decided to seek national press coverage for the endeavor. In an interview with the *Times*, published on March 13th, she announced the formation of the Committee on Slavery and Justice. "Dr. Simmons," the *Times* reported, "has directed Brown to start what its officials say is an unprecedented undertaking for a university: an exploration of reparations for slavery and specifically whether Brown should pay reparations or otherwise make amends for its past." The Brown family, the *Times* pointed out, had owned slaves and engaged in the slave trade, and Simmons was a great-granddaughter of slaves. "I sit here in my office," Simmons said in the article, "beneath the portrait of people who lived at a different time and who saw the ownership of people in a different way. You can't sit in an office and face that every day unless you really want to know, unless you really want to understand this dichotomy."

The *Times* article, picked up by other news organizations, caused a commotion among Brown alumni. As some of them saw it, Simmons had started a process that could end with a commitment to pay out a huge sum of money. The alumni did not protest publicly, but their murmuring was audible enough to alarm the development office, which was just then beginning Simmons's ambitious capital campaign. On April 28th, Simmons published an op-ed piece in the Boston *Globe* in which she wrote, "The committee's work is not about whether or how we should pay reparations. That was never the intent nor will the payment of reparations be the outcome. This is an effort designed to involve the campus community in a discovery of the meaning of our past."

She had not changed her mind about the committee's purpose: she had set it up as a purely academic endeavor, and the committee members were quite clear about that. In her charge to the committee, delivered the year before, she wrote that its goal "will not be to achieve consensus, but to provide factual information and critical perspectives." There was no suggestion that the committee should decide what Brown ought to do about its past. What's more, the committee, whose members Simmons had picked, seemed unlikely to exceed her instructions: it included three university deans and two professors who declared that they opposed monetary reparations. When I asked Simmons about the *Times* piece, she blamed herself for not having been clear enough—and the reporter for having missed the nuances in an effort to distill the story. "It never occurred to me to say we're not going to pay reparations, because I'm not a proponent of monetary reparations," she said.

James Campbell, an energetic young

*"Marty's back. He says he couldn't find anybody to schmooze with."*

professor of American civilization and Africana studies, who chairs the committee, told me that he was surprised and distressed by the *Times* piece. "The story they wanted to tell was 'Descendant of slaves wants monetary reparations for slavery.' They made it sound personal and reduced her to a person she's not. I see a woman who is profoundly committed to the idea of a university, to examining difficult ideas and welcoming all points of view." The *Times* may have wanted to focus the story on Simmons's background, but, if so, Simmons had left herself open to it by twice referring to herself as a descendant of slaves and by describing her own reaction to sitting beneath a portrait of people (actually, James Manning) "who saw the ownership of people in a different way." Further, an African-American taking over the presidency of a university that black intellectuals were charging had been founded by slave traders had at least something of a personal problem. But the real trouble was that, having set up an open-ended academic project, Simmons could not then close it by saying that she opposed monetary reparations. When the *Times* reporter asked whether her background would sway the inquiry, she replied, "I don't think there can be a person with a better background for dealing with this issue than me." To some white alumni, the remark seemed yet another cause for concern about Brown's endowment—yet what she clearly meant was that she was in the best position to defend the university. "If you ask what my fondest wish is," Simmons said of the committee, "it's that something will come out of it to benefit our teaching and the way students understand our history."

From its inception, the committee has faced two very large tasks: on the one hand, writing the history of Brown's connections to slavery, and, on the other, examining reparations in comparative contexts. Of the two, the first would seem to be the simpler, but there are no Rhode Island historians on the committee (there are none at Brown), and, as Robert Emlen pointed out before the committee was formed, considerable pedantry would be required to track down all the people with ties to slavery who gave money to Brown in the antebellum years. (In addition to the Rhode Island merchants and manufacturers, some of the donors were Baptists from the South, any number of whom might have owned slaves.) When I spoke with Simmons last fall, she said that she expected the committee merely to open the way for future scholars. "We're not going to write a definitive history," Campbell said. "We're going to create frames for thinking about it." Still, if the committee is to fulfill the expectations for it, it must give some account of the Brown brothers, and particularly of John, who served as the treasurer of Rhode Island College for two decades and gave half the money for its library.

CRY of the WILD 50¢
BOOTH.

Campbell, like any good historian, believes that it's important to understand John Brown and his brothers in the context of their day. "People are always looking for Simon Legrees," he said to me last fall. "They tend to focus on one particular bad guy—and it helps if he's rich. To me, what's important is to look at the whole society." Yet to focus on the Browns and slave trading is, of necessity, to come up with a morality play of fraternal struggle, between the good brother Moses and the bad brother John. Campbell doesn't like this kind of approach to history, but he couldn't help concluding, "John Brown was a bad man in the context of his day."

To delve into the history of the Browns is, however, to find that neither John nor Moses is so easily categorized. For one thing—legends aside—John was not a major slave trader. According to J. Stanley Lemons, a Rhode Island historian, who has checked the family's business records, John sent out just four slaving voyages in the course of as many decades, the first one in 1769. More important, though, is the matter of context. The conflict over slavery and abolition was inextricably bound up with the Revolution, the creation of the Union, and the development of the American economy after independence. The Brown brothers played important roles in all these events.

The Browns were a close-knit family, and until the early seventeen-seventies they worked together in business and in politics. Nicholas, the eldest, was cautious and conservative, and put the family firm on solid foundations as a manufacturing as well as a mercantile enterprise. Joseph, the second brother, had no head for business but great skills in mechanics and design. He managed the candle works, operated the Hope Furnace, and studied astronomy, electricity, and architecture. Before the Revolution, he designed the beautiful, high-spired First Baptist Church on College Hill, where Brown commencements are held, and afterward became a professor of natural philosophy at the college. John, born in 1736, and Moses, two years younger, had greater ambitions, yet the two were in many ways opposites. A tall, imposing figure, John gained such girth late in life that he was known as the "Providence Colossus." Moses was small, slight, and often sickly. As an entrepreneur, John was, as one historian put it, an Elizabethan merchant-adventurer in a new setting. A warrior by nature and physically brave, he had a far greater tolerance for risks than Nicholas, and fewer scruples. By the time he was thirty, his independent shipping ventures had made him the richest man in Providence. After the Revolution, he built a Georgian brick house, designed by Joseph, which John Quincy Adams said was "the most magnificent and elegant private mansion" he'd seen on the continent. John ate well, entertained lavishly, and, with Nicholas, tried to establish a theatre in Providence, at a time when most of the Baptist brethren thought it the work of the Devil. Moses, by contrast, was an Enlightenment figure in the American vein. He was an innovative businessman, but neither the risks nor the moneymaking engaged him. He preferred to live simply on his farm, outside Providence, where he followed a regimen of temperance, strict diet, and exercise. He read widely, and in the course of his long life—he lived to be ninety-seven—he developed expertise in scientific farming, economics, medicine, and public health. (He introduced Rhode Island physicians to the smallpox vaccine, and, when there was an outbreak of yellow fever in Providence, he did the epidemiological research himself.) He was also a philanthropist, and helped found a boarding school, a deaf-and-dumb asylum, a school for children of color, the Providence Athenaeum, and the Rhode Island Historical Society. For all their differences, John and Moses were both deeply engaged in the politics of their day, and both were outsized characters, with the kind of energy, drive, and focus that Ruth Simmons would recognize better than most.

*"I just have a few minor fixes that will ruin everything you've come up with."*

In 1771, John left Nicholas Brown & Company in order to invest more aggressively in shipping. Two years later, Moses also quit the firm. His wife, Anna, the daughter of his uncle Obadiah, had died, and he fell into a profound depression. Anna had become a Quaker, and Moses, in his distress, read Quaker literature, sought the company of her fellows, and, in 1774, became a member of the Society of Friends. His conversion was life-changing. The Quakers, unique among American sects, had long opposed slave trading, and had come to oppose slavery itself. Moses manumitted the six slaves he owned, and, for the rest of his life, acted as banker, lawyer, and counsellor to the freedmen and -women who sought his help. In the past, he had been active, along with his brothers, in the struggle for the rights of the American colonists. But the Quakers were pacifists, and on the eve of the Revolution he advocated a peaceful reconciliation with Britain. Then, in the interests of holding the New England Quaker community together, he accepted the official Quaker position that the Revolution was illegitimate and that the Friends should not pay taxes to the new government or accept Continental paper money.

John, for his part, helped start the Revolution. In 1772, a year of tranquillity in which many thought that a peaceful resolution to British-American differences could be found, the British schooner Gaspee ran aground while pursuing one of his sloops. The Gaspee, in search of contraband, had been stopping every vessel entering and leaving Narragansett Bay, and John had had enough of it. He rounded up a party of seamen and in the middle of the night rowed out to the ship with eight longboats, forced the crew off, and burned the schooner to the waterline. King George III's government offered a thousand-pound reward and declared that the perpetrators of this "act of treason" would be tried in London and put to death. The British never found anyone to inform on John and his men, but their threat to try Americans in London alarmed American patriots. At the instigation of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, Committees of Correspondence were formed in the colonies, independence was freely discussed, and the first Continental Congress convened, in 1774.

The following year, just after the Battle of Lexington and Concord, John was captured in Narragansett Bay sailing two packet boats loaded with flour destined for the newly created

ALL OF MY HOPES AND DREAMS, CRUSHED, SERVED ON A BUN
WITH MUSTARD

American army in Massachusetts. The British captain could not prove that the supplies were for the rebels, but he charged John with burning the Gaspee and sent him to Boston in the brig of a warship. Moses rode posthaste to Boston, and got John released on the promise that his brother would use his influence to put an end to the military hostilities in Massachusetts. John made one speech to the Rhode Island legislature and then went back to his war work. That fall, while Moses was leading a Quaker relief mission to Massachusetts, John took the first kegs of gunpowder to George Washington's army in Cambridge. For the rest of the war, he and Nicholas supplied the Continental Army with matériel, manufactured cannons at the Hope Furnace, and built privateers to capture transports provisioning the British troops. John's gaff-rigged sloop, the Providence, became John Paul Jones's favorite command.

After the war, Moses led a determined campaign to end the slave trade and slavery in Rhode Island—with some success. The Revolution had dealt a powerful blow to the ideological underpinnings of slavery and had shaken the Colonial social order. Clergy and laymen of other denominations joined the cause of abolition. In 1784, the Rhode Island legislature passed a bill emancipating all children born to slaves from March of that year on. Slaveholding slowly declined, and by 1790 two out of three blacks in the state had attained freedom. Slave trading, however, proved more difficult to stop. Lobbied by Moses and other Quakers, the General Assembly passed an anti-slaving law in 1787, and seven years later, as a result of their efforts, the United States Congress banned merchants from engaging in the slave trade between foreign ports. But the merchants, well practiced in evading British sanctions, easily found their way around customs regulations. In Providence, Moses and other Friends formed an Abolition Society and acted to enforce the laws, but in 1795 the Rhode Island slave trade reached prewar levels and afterward rose to new heights.

The issue brought the two brothers into conflict, but for reasons that most historians have missed. John sent out a slaving voyage in 1785 and another in 1786. Three years later, he published a diatribe against Moses's Abolition Society, calling it a Quaker combination bent on ruining honest men. There followed an acrimonious debate in the Providence *Gazette* between John and officers of the society, Moses among them. John was angry, but not on his own account. As he wrote Moses after the second voyage, he was planning new ventures and had no intention of going back into the Guinea trade. He was defending friends of his whom the society planned to sue, and he was angry with the Quakers on another score. After November, 1789, Rhode Island was the only state that had not yet ratified the Constitution, then two years old. Most Rhode Island merchants had long seen the need for a federal government, and John, who hero-worshipped George Washington, had become a leader of the Federalist Party in Rhode Island. But there was considerable opposition to the Union in the state, and some of it came from the Friends, who objected to the slavery compromises in the Constitution. By 1789, what had been a local controversy had turned into a national crisis, and Congress was preparing to cut off all trade with Rhode Island. The following year, the state convention ratified the Constitution by two votes, but only after Congress took steps to turn Rhode Island into a foreign country and Providence threatened to secede from the state.

John and Moses battled over the slave trade until the end of the century. In 1795, a year after the passage of the federal law against slave trading between foreign ports, a record number of slavers set out from Rhode Island. John, despite his decade-old promise to Moses, sent out one of the ships. Moses and the other officers of the Abolition Society, believing that John was testing the law on behalf of the other traders, decided to sue him. Two years later, John became the first person prosecuted under the federal statute, and was forced to forfeit his ship. Undeterred, he ran for Congress in 1799, and, once elected, led an effort to repeal the law. He failed, but then the law didn't affect the South: Rhode Island merchants were the only ones penalized by it.

During this period, John and Moses argued frequently and at length—John just couldn't see anything wrong with the slave trade—yet the two never came near a complete falling out. Both were, after all, loyal family members, and both were involved in many matters other than the ones that divided them. In 1787, John sent his ship the George Washington to China. It was the first ship from Rhode Island and one of the first from the country to make the voyage. In the following years, his ships visited ports in South America, Australia, the Spice Islands, India, and China, opening up the Far Eastern trade for other New England merchants. Meanwhile, Moses, with the help of an English journeyman, Samuel Slater, built a water-powered cotton mill, the first manufacturing enterprise in the country. The Slater mill, as John Brown had anticipated in the Providence *Gazette* debate, bought cotton from Southern slaveholders and sold some of it back to them in the form of coarse cloth for slaves. It also helped spawn an industry that by the middle of the nineteenth century sustained the economy of much of New England and contributed to the country's move toward self-sufficiency. In 1791, John and Moses founded a bank, the fifth private bank in the United States, to promote "the commercial, mechanical, and manufacturing interests" of Providence. They later built the roads, bridges, and wharves that the growth of the town required. During John's years in Congress, they exchanged chatty letters about family matters, the bank, and John's new acquaintances Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr.

John died in 1803, at the age of sixty-seven, leaving an estate of six hundred thousand dollars, all of which went to his family. A few months after his death, however, Nicholas Brown, Jr., gave Rhode Island College five thousand dollars to establish a chair in English oratory in his uncle's memory. In recognition of Nicholas's gift, the Corporation changed the name of the college to Brown in 1804. It was a wise decision, for in the course of his life Nicholas gave the college a hundred and sixty thousand dollars.

At Brown, the Committee on Slavery and Justice has been holding lectures and panel discussions on topics ranging from the Tulsa race riots of 1921 to apartheid in historical memory. It has sponsored a high-school curriculum and a museum exhibit on slavery in New England, both of which feature the voyage of the Sally. It is now thinking about how best to institutionalize the discussion of slavery and justice at the university, and is considering new courses, fellowships, a study center, and a memorial dedicated to the slaves who helped build University Hall. The committee's report is due by the end of this year, and while Campbell anticipates that some may see it as an exercise in political correctness and others as a completely inadequate response, he hopes that it will provide a model for universities with similar histories to use in conducting discussions about their past. Campbell worries about the media sound bites that will herald the report; however, slavery and justice is not the explosive topic that it was three years ago. The reparations movement has had no success with its lawsuits, and has taken another direction. (Activists have been urging city councils to pass ordinances requiring that city contractors disclose any historical link to slavery, with the idea that those whose predecessors profited from slave labor can be shamed into making reparations.) Most of the Brown alumni have been reassured about the purpose of the committee (though some donors have stipulated that their gifts not be used for reparations). As for the campus, it has turned to issues that seem more pressing.

According to James Campbell, the committee's report will have as its centerpiece a short history of the Brown brothers' involvement with slavery and the debate between Moses and John over the slave trade, to be supplemented by a Web site on the Browns and slavery. Campbell told me that he was happy to discover the debate, because it illustrated the moral choices within a historical context, and relieved the committee of having to provide its own account of the moral climate of the day. "Contextualization always gets read as extenuation," he said. The report will apparently make no mention of the Browns' other activities. The committee was not, of course, charged with writing their biographies, but its focus will reduce them, as Providence legend does, to slave traders and reformed slave traders.

Simmons, in the meantime, has raised about half a billion dollars for the capital campaign and made considerable progress with her renewal program. She has instituted need-blind admissions, filled forty-one new faculty positions, and increased faculty salaries. A building for molecular-medicine laboratories has been completed, and four other buildings for labs and study centers are under construction. In addition, Simmons has replaced the entire top administrative staff of the university and reorganized Brown's fund-raising efforts and the way that the governing boards operate. In the past year, however, her relationship with the faculty has become less than harmonious. For one thing, Brown's budget remains tight, and by hiring senior professors and giving them generous research funds to improve the graduate schools she has drained resources away from undergraduate teaching. For another, the money has gone to the departments and new initiatives, as opposed to the interdisciplinary programs that have attracted some of the best students to Brown. In the view of many faculty members, her approach has been both too conventional and too top-down, and she hasn't provided the visionary educational leadership that they had hoped for. Asked about such criticisms, Simmons told a Providence *Journal* reporter, "I'm not afraid of the political machinations that abound on a campus. What I am here to do, I will do, irrespective of all that." Whether she will achieve all of her goals remains to be seen, but thus far she has done what she promised the trustees, and she has, she says, become more comfortable with the portrait of James Manning in her office. ♦

FICTION

# COPING STONES

### BY ANN BEATTIE

Cahill—Dr. Cahill to those who knew him in his small town in Maine—had decided that his screened porch should be relocated. Wouldn't it be better to winterize the current porch, adding a door at the far end which would lead to a new, smaller porch, perpendicular to the original? That way, he could walk out of the kitchen in the winter with his cup of freshly brewed coffee and his vitamin drink (those mornings when he went to the trouble to make it) and enjoy the late-blooming flowers on an enclosed, heated porch. In the summer, he could set up a makeshift desk—probably just the card table—and not have to worry that rain would ruin his paperwork. There was so much paperwork! His wife, Barbara, used to manage most of it, but she'd been dead for more than eight years, and, except for what his accountant did and the occasional question he asked his tenant, Matt, he dealt with it all himself now, and not a bit of it had anything to do with medicine.

Matt lived in Cahill's renovated barn. Thirty-two years old, he had already suffered a divorce (at twenty-four) and the death of his second wife, who'd been knocked out of her kayak by a low-hanging branch and drowned, in Canada. Several times during the past year, Cahill had noticed Matt coming home with a woman, but he'd also noticed that the woman—or women—almost always left the same night. Once, he had been lured into playing a game of croquet with Matt and a woman named Leora, but usually he avoided contact when Matt had company; he felt that Matt became sour and withdrawn when women were around, as if he were still suffering through adolescence. But Matt—Matt was his preoccupation. Cahill had the sense to extend fewer dinner invitations to his tenant and friend than he wanted to, because the man needed his freedom. If Barbara were alive, and if Matt's wife had not died, Matt would no doubt have been living somewhere else, and Cahill would have had more interesting things to think about. It was just that his world had shrunk since he'd retired.

Right now, Cahill was talking to a man Matt had nicknamed You Know What I Mean, a tall, perpetually windblown-looking carpenter whom Cahill had recently advised to have what he felt sure was a skin cancer removed from the side of his nose. His real name was Roadie Petruski, and, as Roadie tried to smooth down his electrified hair, Cahill listened to his beliefs concerning pressure-treated wood: "You know yourself, Doc, these things leach into the environment. Before you know it, your lungs are Swiss cheese, you know what I mean? This genetically engineered corn, the Europeans don't want nothing to do with it. But us? We always got optimism. You probably read about rat kidneys shutting down when they was fed the stuff? I read it in one of those doctor's-office magazines—meaning no disrespect. My advice is always to seal up pressure-treated boards with the best sealant available, and even then you don't want to walk on it without shoes, you know what I mean?"

"Whatever you think best in terms of flooring, Roadie," Cahill said.

"Not up to me! Always up to the customer!"

"Well, I certainly agree with what you've informed me of, so let us proceed as you suggest."

"That's the thing, Doc. That's the direction you want to go."

In the distance, a cardinal twittered on a tree branch. If Cahill had had his binoculars, he would have raised them—he loved cardinals—but they were on the back porch. The same back porch that was going to be transformed into a heated room off the kitchen. Matt must be at home, Cahill thought: he could faintly hear Mick Jagger singing. The bird, too, must have heard the music, because it swooped away, dipping down for just a second to check out the goings on on the porch.

A man he and Matt had dubbed You Got No Choice had visited a few days earlier. He'd come from town hall to inform Cahill that a wall on his property was in need of maintenance, and that, as the owner of the property on which the wall stood, surrounding a four-headstone cemetery dating back to the eighteen-hundreds, Cahill was responsible for repairs; he had no choice. There had been a lot of freezing during the winter, the man explained, and spring had been unusually wet. Such things accelerated deterioration. Cahill was told that he must keep "vegetation" six feet from the wall in all directions (he had no choice) and that no mortar could be used in rebuilding it. "I took a look just now, Doc, and from what I can tell it's pretty much just a matter of replacing some of them coping stones along the top," the man said, moving one hand up and down to indicate peaks and gulleys. "And—just to remind you—it's all gotta be done by hand." He handed Cahill a Post-it note with "URGNT fx g-yard wall 7/16" written on it in pencil, and then nodded while backing away, as though he were taking leave of the Queen of England. If Cahill hadn't known better, he would have thought he was being made fun of. The man climbed into his truck and drove away, music blaring. Tchaikovsky's notes bit the air like muriatic acid.

Following the encounter, Cahill proceeded directly to Matt's, where he knocked and entered to find him starting a new painting of a fruit bowl. Matt's still-lifes were distinguished by the unconventional objects he included—plastic rhinos, a single beaded earring, a Princess Di figurine lying on its side. Cahill was gratified not to see a beer bottle on Matt's table. The daytime drinking was new, and not a good sign. The painting class—of course it was harmless, and no doubt interesting, but did he imagine that solitary painting was a way of rejoining the world? In his opinion, Matt had got entirely too large a payment from his wife's life-insurance company. Cahill had a millionaire living in his barn and functioning variously as his repairman, class clown, snow-removal guy, and sometime chauffeur. But he liked Matt, relied on him. The cliché would probably be that Matt was the son he never had, but then his daughter, Joyce, was enough like a son: in spite of his dire warnings, for years she'd taken steroids and lifted weights. The year her mother died, she had come East and chopped down the dead trees on his property and sawed and stacked them for firewood. She had size-11 feet encased in men's work boots, and a tattoo on her arm of the nation's flag, below which lurked a spiny lizard with a tongue unfurled to capture an insect. It seemed likely that Matt had a nickname for Joyce, too, but he'd had the good manners to keep quiet about it.

Cahill examined Matt's odd painting

PETER HAAKON THOMPSON, "BLURRY BEHIND TREE" (2002)/SCOTT NICHOLS GALLERY

and pronounced it "coming along." He grumbled briefly about the visit from You Got No Choice, which provoked—as Cahill knew it would—negative generalizations about the self-righteousness of New Englanders.

On his way back to the house, Cahill went to inspect the graveyard. He had not noticed that the wall there was in need of repair, nor had he thought that anyone would tell him that fixing it was his responsibility. In the plot lay two children, one aged three, the other eleven months, the cuts in their stones mostly filled with moss. Their mother had died at twenty-three, the father at seventy-one—a good age to have attained. No headstone indicated another marriage. Pink and white phlox grew nearby, and sometimes—rarely, but sometimes—Cahill would cut a few stalks and put them in one of his late wife's crystal vases to commemorate her domesticity.

That afternoon, Napoleon, the neighbor's basset hound, paid a visit and was rewarded—though Cahill knew it was wrong—with one saltine. Cahill flipped through a copy of *Science News* and, finally, an hour or so later, walked the basset hound to the road, picking him up for the dangerous crossing, then down four houses, where he saw that Breezy's car was gone and the back gate unlatched. He led the dog into the back yard and firmly shut the gate.

A week or so after You Got No Choice stopped by, a letter arrived from Code Enforcement informing "Property Owner Cahill" that he was in violation of an assemblage of hyphenated numbers. He was so angry that he could hardly focus on what it said. You Got No Choice had told him that he had thirty days in which to make repairs. Nevertheless, after he made a cup of tea and stopped fuming, he put on his work clothes and stalked into the yard. He took his tool kit with him, though he didn't know why; it seemed the sort of job best done with one's hands. He saw that his tool kit contained work gloves, so he put them on and set about replacing the rocks that had fallen. Some were missing, but where had they gone? Matt must have moved them to mow and stacked them somewhere. But he'd already interrupted Matt once that morning, so he decided to find the few rocks he needed elsewhere. He took off the gloves and dropped them back in the tool kit. As he did, a wasp came out of nowhere, like a stealth bomber, and stung him. He yanked his hand sideways in pain, wincing and squeezing his wrist. In the house, he made a paste of baking soda and water in a teacup and smeared it on, then swallowed an antihistamine, just in case.

When the Benadryl kicked in, he went upstairs to lie down, and he was surprised when he woke up hours later. He went into the bathroom and undressed, turned on the shower, and stepped in, grasping the shower bar. What would his wife have said of this latest mishap? That he had somehow invited the wasp? Barbara had had many good qualities, but charity toward him when he was hurt was not among them. He thought that perhaps it had frightened her, to know that he was human. She had said many times, only half-jokingly, that she'd married a man she thought could take good care of her.

He dried off with his favorite towel, threw it over the shower door, and went downstairs, where he made another cup of tea. His wrist was tender but no longer painful. Napoleon was standing silently at the porch door. The dog was going to be killed crossing Route 91. Didn't Breezy care? He opened the door, and the basset hound bounded in, something clamped in his teeth. It was a dead chipmunk. Napoleon dropped it, with its bitten bloody neck, at Cahill's feet and looked up expectantly.

"Maybe the doctor could work it in around five o'clock," Cahill said, staring down at the creature. "But the doctor is a very busy man, you know."

The dog knew none of these words. Cahill relented. "Good boy," he said to the dog, who wagged his tail furiously and nosed the chipmunk, then looked up for further approval. This would have set his wife screaming. Cahill patted the dog's head, keeping it from the dead thing, then picked the chipmunk up by its tail and dropped it in the trash. This meant that he would have to take the trash out immediately, but no matter. He washed his hands. All those years of careful washing, using the brush, scrubbing under nonexistent fingernails—oh, his precious hands. Now a minuscule rim of fingernail protruded on a few of his fingers, and this brought him a certain sense of pride. He'd never tell anyone anything so ridiculous, but there it was: he liked having fingernails. "We are two very impressive gentlemen, aren't we?" he said to the dog. The interrogative always made the dog's tail wag frantically. "But maybe it's time to be getting home—what do you say?" He looked at the list of phone numbers taped to his refrigerator, then welled up with sudden anger: he'd call Breezy, and she could walk over and get her dog this time. Enough of the escort service. He dialled her number. Above the phone was hung a copy of an etching he had always loved, and had kept above his desk in the private part of his office: "Abraham's Sacrifice," by Michelangelo, the angel's hands so exquisitely, so lightly placed. "Breezy?" he said, when he heard her voice. "I've got Napoleon over here and I think it's time for him to come home, if you'd be so kind."

"I am so sorry. Did he run away again?" Breezy asked. "Ever since I started taking classes up in Orono, there's no keeping him in the yard. But the other thing is, he just loves you. It's hard to keep him behind the fence."

"I noticed that. He's going to be hit by a car, Breezy, and you're never going to forgive yourself. You've got to do something about that gate latch."

He looked at the dog, sniffing the trash can. It was too tall for him to get his snout in.

"Absolutely," she said. "I'm going to speak to Ed at the hardware store about how to fix the latch. Tomorrow."

"They're open till nine tonight," he said.

"Morty, you do not hint subtly!" she exclaimed. "I'm overwhelmed tonight, if you must know, with Father having misplaced his glasses and his teeth, and he's got a terrible cold, so he's in a foul mood. The practical nurse didn't show up today, either."

"A lot of part-timers in that profession," he said. "Doesn't make for reliability."

"Well, Morty, that may be true, but what alternative do I have? If dear Barbara were still alive, I could at least get a hug."

Breezy had been his wife's best friend.

She had received endless sympathy from Barbara—especially concerning her father's move into her house. Breezy was one of the reasons that Barbara had wanted to spend what turned out to be the last winter of her life in Maine.

After they hung up, Breezy did not appear for so long that he suspected she might not be coming at all. The dog lay curled next to him in the living room, as Cahill read a book called "How Buildings Learn," his feet stretched out on the footstool. Finally, she arrived.

"Morty, I hope I didn't cause you pain by mentioning Barbara," she blurted, instead of saying hello. The dog rose and shook himself, ambling toward her. She bent and stroked his side. "You ran away again," she said. "Did Napoleon run away again?"

"Exile to Elba next time," Cahill said.

"I've been to the hardware store. Ed was off tonight, but I left a note saying I came in and that it was an emergency. We are going to solve this problem, aren't we?" she said in baby talk to the dog. Then she turned to Cahill. "Morty, I feel sometimes that when I say something you aren't . . . I don't know . . . that you don't approve of what I'm saying. I don't want a gold star for going to the hardware store, but I did go there as you suggested."

"I'm afraid the dog is going to be hit by a car, Breezy," he said, with the firm sympathy of a doctor giving a bad diagnosis. He heard his voice pitched a bit too low, and softened. "Just a long day," he said, standing. Breezy—she'd got her nickname because she loved to talk—was clearly hoping to be asked to stay for a cup of tea. But it had been a bad day—the officious letter, the wasp—and he realized that he'd had nothing to eat since breakfast. He patted Breezy's shoulder as if she were a patient he was steering gently out the door. At the front stoop, she turned to face him and said, "I know you miss her very much, Morty. I do, too, every day of my life," and then she was gone, down the steps, curving with the path into the night, Napoleon—so named because the dog did not like to chew on bones, though he liked to tear the bones apart (the sole original thing he'd ever known Breezy's father to come up with)—trotting along on his leash without a backward glance.

*"That one looks like a falling engine."*

• •

Cahill went into the kitchen and took a potpie from the freezer, placed it on a cookie sheet, and set the oven for four-fifty. Though the oven had not reached the correct temperature, he put his dinner in anyway. Then came another knock at the front door: most certainly Breezy, back for some reason.

Cahill went to the door and opened it. A young woman was standing there.

"Dr. Cahill?" she said. "Excuse me for knocking so late. I'm Audrey Comstock. I live in Portsmouth."

"Yes?" he said.

"May I come in? I'm a friend of Matt's."

"Enter," he said, gesturing toward the living room. She walked in and looked around. She did not sit, nor did he motion toward a chair. Patients were that way: some would remain standing forever if you did not formally offer them a seat. "What can I do for you?" he said.

"Get him to marry me," she said.

"Excuse me?"

"He doesn't think he can leave here. You," she amended. "Leave you."

"I know nothing about this," he said.

"We've been seeing each other for more than a year. We met at a painting group in Portsmouth. At Christmas, he all but proposed."

"Oh?" he said. At Christmas, Matt had prepared a goose and cooked parsnips from the root cellar. They had eaten the meal with some Stonewall Kitchen condiment—a sort of jelly with garlic. Was he to believe that all that time Matt had been in love but had never mentioned the person's name? Of course, anything was possible. A patient having a physical would say that nothing was bothering him, and only when he'd taken off his shirt would Cahill see that he was broken out in shingles, or had cut himself badly and wasn't properly healing.

"I'm not sure why you're here," he said. She was an unpleasant-looking woman—in her early twenties, he thought. Her beak of a nose, crammed too tightly between her small eyes, made it difficult to look at her with a neutral expression.

She said, "I wanted to tell you that you wouldn't be losing a son; you'd be gaining a daughter."

"My child is grown and gone," he said. "I am looking for neither."

She looked at him blankly for a moment. "He doesn't feel like he can leave," she said again.

"I assure you he can," Cahill said.

"We have our art work in common," she said, as if he'd asked for further explanation.

He looked at her.

"Matt and me," she said finally.

"This matter is entirely between you and Matt," he said. "You don't have to persuade me of anything."

"He respects you. You're like a father figure to him. It's just that he doesn't think he can leave you."

"You've said that many times," Cahill said. "I've explained that he can leave."

"He loves me," she said. "He said he'd take care of me."

"Well," he said, "perhaps you can work things out. When people are meant to be together, such things have been known to happen."

"You're trying to get rid of me," she said in a trembling voice. "You don't think I'm good enough."

"Please do me the favor of not attempting to read my mind," he said. "I was about to eat a late dinner when you knocked, and now it's time to do that, if you'll excuse me."

She stamped her foot. The woman was ridiculous; he would have to get a peephole and not let such people in.

"Can I see?" she said plaintively.

Cahill stared at her. "See what?" he said.

"Just once, can I find out if somebody's trying to get rid of me or if you're really eating dinner?"

He almost expressed his surprise, but checked his reaction. He levelled his eyes on her, wondering whether she wasn't shamed by her own childishness. Of course, such people rarely were. "By all means," he said. "The kitchen door is right there."

Surely she would not really go in, but no—of course she would. Like an obese patient advised to diet who would proceed immediately to the nearest vending machine for a candy bar. There she went, to view his potpie. She would be seeing that, and the landslide of mostly unread newspapers that needed to be thrown out, a few days' worth of dirty dishes in the sink. He had not yet carried out the trash, so perhaps even the dead chipmunk had begun to smell.

"That's all you're eating?" she said, returning to the room. In a gentler tone of voice, she said, "I could cook for you. Make extra when I cook for Matt and me."

"I assume Matt doesn't know you're here?" he said.

She shrugged. "I can't find him," she said. "I thought maybe he was here."

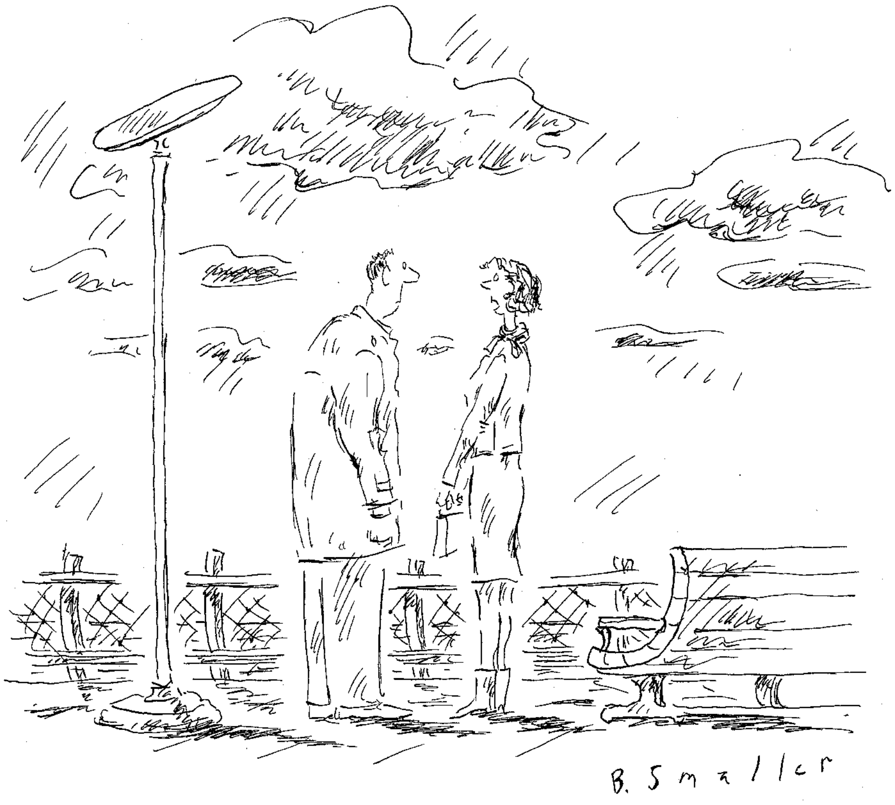
He gestured toward the front door. "When you find him, you can discuss with him these generous impulses," he said. "I wish you good night."

She started to say something. He could almost sense the second when she decided against it and turned to leave. He followed her out the door and stood on the stoop. No lights were on in the barn. The stars shone brightly, and there was a faint, wind-chime-tinged breeze. Breezy's house was the only one he could see that was lit. Matt's car was not in the driveway. Audrey waved sadly, overacting, the poor child cast out into the night. He did not return the wave.

Damn the woman! There was nothing he liked less than getting caught up in other people's soap operas. He wrote a quick note on the pad by the phone and walked over to stick it to Matt's front door. "Met your friend Audrey," the note said. "Stop by when you get back."

The next morning, when he answered his front door he saw not Matt but Deirdre Rambell, who worked as a secretary at town hall and had heard about what she called, with hushed sincerity, the situation. "Deirdre, it's a few rocks that I've already put back," he said. "The town is making a mountain out of a molehill."

"Oh, it's the Historical Society, you know. The volunteers go around check-



*"Face it—there is no good time to get married, have children, and move to Jersey."*

ing, and they really care. For my own part, I've always felt the dead have souls that cannot be at peace when they sense any lack of respect."

"Souls sense respect?" he said. He realized with slight embarrassment that although he was wearing chinos, he still had on his pajama top.

"Indeed they do," she said.

"Then let me inform you, Deirdre, that at this point I have replaced all but a couple of the six or seven stones necessary to give the souls their deserved respect. Let me also ask you this: Do you happen to really know or care anything about the people buried on this property? About their lives, I mean—as people, rather than as souls?"

Nothing in his tone registered with her. "Aren't they Moultons?" she said. "Fine people, among the first settlers."

"Onward!" she exclaimed when she finally drove away.

Yes, he thought, that sort of woman always feels that she's making progress.

You Got No Choice appeared next, apologizing for what he called the "slipup" at town hall. "That lamebrained letter was embarrassing," he said, rolling his eyes. "I just found out, Doc, and came right over to apologize."

"You, and the rest of the town, will be relieved to know that, as infirm as I am, the wall has been repaired, and now all is well with the world."

"Excellent, Doc!" He tugged the brim of his cap.

"You wouldn't have seen Matt's van anywhere around town, would you?" Cahill said. "I haven't seen him in a while."

"Are you kidding?" You Got No Choice said.

"Kidding?"

"You don't know?"

"Know what?" Cahill said.

"Up in Warren," he said warily, as if Cahill might be having him on. "It's been all over the papers."

You Got No Choice saw the answer in Cahill's expression. "Doc—they got him on some molesting-a-minor thing, or something. I didn't want to bring up a sore subject. I know he was like a son to you. You get rounded up by the cops, you got no choice—you go where the Man says you go, right? Don't mean you're guilty."

Cahill put his hand out to brace himself on the doorframe. His mind was racing, but it moved neither backward nor forward. It raced like a car on a lift, with someone inside gunning the engine.

"Sorry to drop a bomb on you. Articles have been in the paper every day, as far's I know."

"It's impossible," Cahill said, having recovered enough to speak, though he could hardly hear his own voice.

"Say what?"

"Why wouldn't he have called me? Why wouldn't police have come to the barn, why—"

"There you go," You Got No Choice said. "Fishy, huh? You got a point; it's odd if they haven't made no search."

Cahill almost tripped on the rug in the entryway on his way back into the house. He walked toward the kitchen and the pile of papers, which he wanted to look through immediately, and not at all. "Real life," as his wife would have said. He sank into a kitchen chair and brushed the newspapers onto the floor, putting his head in his hands. The phone rang, and he got up and walked numbly toward it. Matt? Calling to say what? "This is Joyce," his daughter said.

"Joyce, my dear, this is not a time I can talk," he said, but another voice intruded. "And this is Tara," a younger, more high-pitched voice sing-alonged, and he realized he'd been talking to a recording. He heard chimes, and the first unmistakable notes of the wedding march. His daughter's voice said, "We're sending this recording on the happiest day of our lives to announce that at one o' clock July 20, 2005, we were joined together in a commitment ceremony, blessed by Mother Goddess Devi, and we are now officially Joyce"—the squeaky voice broke in—"and Tara." "Forever!" the voices shouted in unison. Next, he recognized the familiar strident voice of his daughter: "Don't be put out that you weren't invited," she said. "Our ceremony consisted of only Mother Devi, Tara's brother who lives next door—who did a bee-yoo-tee-ful Sufi dance—and our little girl Fluffy Sunshine, with a collar of bells and white pansies." Tara broke in: "When you get this message, we'll be in the air to Hawaii." "Peace and love to you, and may you recognize the happiness we have experienced today," his daughter said. Bells clanged merrily; over their ringing, he heard them giggling, voices overlapping: "*Inshallah*. G-g-g-goodbye, folks!"

He put his head in his hands again, pushing his fingertips against his eyelids until he felt pain.

He went to the barn in the dark, shining the flashlight in front of him. It had rained, and tiny frogs leaped across the dirt road like tiddlywinks. In front of him grew the rhododendrons that Matt had been so delighted to have found in some nursery's compost heap: two of them, with electric-lavender flowers, grown large beside the door. The ink on Cahill's Post-it note had run into one black smear. He knocked, though it was obvious that the place was deserted. He had read enough in the paper to make him sick.

An oversized T-shirt was draped over an oak ladder-back chair. Matt had glued the chair's leg for him some months back, and somehow it had remained in the barn. On the kitchen table were a few shiny copper pennies, and a "Little Mermaid" key ring. Cahill felt revulsion. He was also afraid that the police might zoom in on the barn and find him there, snooping. He understood sadly and too late about the toys that Matt had taken pride in rescuing from the dump. They were to lure children, of course. The tag-sale Barbies on the bathroom shelf, stripped of clothes and bracketing the can of shaving cream, the bathroom glass, and the electric razor that Cahill had given Matt for his birthday—he saw the dolls as the bait they were. How could he have been so obtuse?

He sat in his old chair and surveyed the room. It resonated with silence. This had once been his wife's dance studio, the place where she practiced—only for the love of it; she'd been too old to seriously dance ballet. This had been her private place, where she watched tapes of Nureyev dancing and no doubt imagined herself being lifted high by his strong hands; where she wore tights and one of Cahill's old white shirts long beyond the time when she would have appeared coquettish in such attire. But now he had to accept the fact that the barn had been desecrated, inhabited for years by a person he'd misjudged, toward whom his wife would have felt the greatest contempt. A slight smell of sweat hung in the air—at least, the kitchen had that odor. He got up and opened the refrigerator—not expecting a Jeffrey Dahmer banquet but checking nonetheless. A bottle of cheap champagne lay on its side, and a couple of packs of moldy cheese, unsealed. Yellow celery lay in a brownish puddle in the drawer. The opened cans he didn't peer into. He took out the one can of Coke, pulled back the top, and drank it, hoping it would settle his stomach. It was not exactly reassuring that the police hadn't come. Hadn't they made Matt tell them where he lived? He saw an old calendar held with a magnet to the side of the refrigerator: Shirley Temple as a child, sniffing a yellow daisy. Oh, the banality of it. The sad predictability of people's intense yet ultimately unoriginal desires. "You're so superior?" his wife used to chide. Well, yes, he was. At least to some. He took another sip and put the can aside. Well: there were no lollipops. No pictures of little girls naked on the computer, because Matt did not own a computer. A back-to-basics child molester.

It might be, Cahill thought, that the space itself was cursed. There was the time, during its reconstruction, when the carpenter—a strong-bodied, red-haired woman named Elsie—had flirted with him, the strap of her sweaty tank top fallen from one shoulder, and he had questioned her with his eyes, and she had answered in the affirmative. He had moved toward her and gently slipped down the other strap, intending only a kiss to such peach-perfect breasts, when, with the timing of a bad movie, Deirdre Rambell had walked into the barn, carrying the sandwiches and drinks his wife had sent out on a tray. It was funny now—or, if not funny, he still took pleasure in having shocked Deirdre, that holier-than-thou woman. There had been no chance in the world that she would ever report what she'd seen to Barbara. He could still hear the glasses rattling on the tray.

He called the police from Matt's phone—a rotary dial, another of Matt's Salvation Army finds. That was what Cahill thought Matt had been doing: going here and there, collecting trivia as a way of getting over his wife's death. The policeman who answered on the eighth ring—eighth!—seemed none too interested in what he was saying until he raised his voice. "That child molester you've got up there in Warren," he said. "You might want to come over to his house and check through it. This is his landlord calling." Already, he had retreated from the notion of friendship. "I can't understand why you haven't been here before now," he added. The Coke rose up his throat, the acid rush subsiding sickly. He looked at a pencil sketch of trees in an open sketchbook on the counter. A rather lovely little depiction. Well, he thought, nobody does what they do all the time. Another person came on the phone and took down his name and address. When the police appeared, about fifteen minutes later—local police first—he found out three things: that Matt had given an address in Syracuse, though he claimed he'd been living out of his van; and that there *was* an address in Syracuse—the address of his second wife, who was not dead at all. The third thing he found out, but not until they were leaving, was that Matt had got into an altercation with a man in the holding cell and had been stabbed with a homemade shiv.

A few weeks later, Cahill received a note from You Got No Choice, whom he now resolved to think of, more charitably, as Bill: "My boss is breathing down my neck and even though these are rough times and you have my heartfelt condolences, Doc, the wall around the grave still hasn't been fixed to come up to code. I'd be glad to drop by this weekend and have at it with some stone." It was nice of Bill to offer to pitch in, but the letter only strengthened Cahill's resolve to fix the wall himself.

Which he set out to do, after eating a grilled-cheese sandwich for lunch. Protein and carbohydrates were good together, midday. Bad eating had contributed to his wife's untimely death; she'd been diabetic and sometimes wouldn't eat anything for an entire day, calling him a nag. She "felt sick," yes, but it was a vicious circle: feel sick, don't eat; don't eat, feel sick.

He walked to the side of the house where the soil was mixed with chips of old brick and rocks. Nothing much would grow in the shady area, but it was a good place to harvest rocks. He piled

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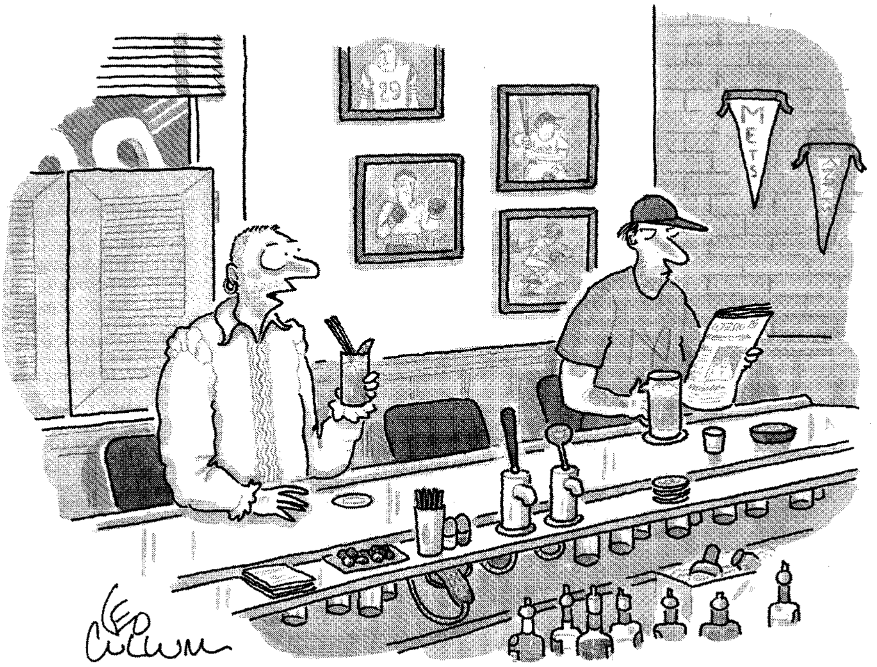

*"By the time I was supposed to resume my hockey career, I had discovered ice dancing."*

• •

them into a discarded one-gallon plastic flowerpot. After some digging, he had what he hoped was enough, and set off with the pot pressed to his ribs, his other hand grasping the handle of his toolbox. Hi ho, hi ho. He wondered if Matt would expect him to get in touch. Hear his side of things. Offer help—if not as a doctor, then as a friend? Whatever Matt expected, Cahill could not bring himself to make an attempt to contact him—at least, not at this point in time.

The barn wasn't roped off, though he supposed it wasn't really a crime scene. So many men had come in unmarked cars lately: anybody could have been rummaging around inside, after a while. What was he supposed to do, run out every time he saw another car and ask to see identification?

Cahill turned to see Napoleon bounding across the lawn, foolish ears flapping like luffing sails. The dog tipped sideways as he came close, rudderless with friendliness. "Come to see the old man?" he said. In answer, Napoleon snapped at a bug. "Cross the busy road for the billionth time, tempting fate?" He rubbed the dog beneath his ears. "Let's let her come after you if and when she gets lonely, yeah," Cahill said, continuing to scratch. While he stacked rocks, he kept an eye on the dog, who was nosing at the edge of the woods.

The wall repair took longer than he'd anticipated, and he had to get the shovel and dig up one quite large stone from beside the porch, but finally he stood back and admired his handiwork. "There you go, Bill, my friend," he said aloud, saluting the air. "Your job done, my job done." He cleaned some fallen leaves and bits of stick out of the area, stepping carefully around the wall. What had they died of, these four? In those days, people could die from an infected tooth. Dying young was to be expected: young, then, had another meaning.

By the time his daughter had graduated from high school, he hadn't loved her or his wife for some time. His fingertips scratching beneath Napoleon's ears now communicated more sincerity than all the kisses he'd planted formally on the cheeks of his wife and daughter. His wife knew that he'd done things automatically, without feeling. "Reading your rhymes like they make order of things," she'd sneered, as, in her last days, he sat beside her bed reading poems by Yeats, or D. H. Lawrence, poems that rarely rhymed. It was clear where his daughter got her mocking ability. She'd

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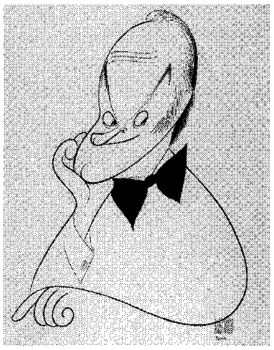

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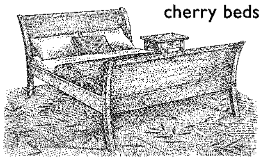

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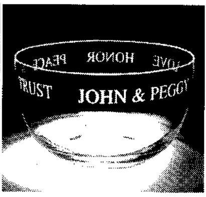

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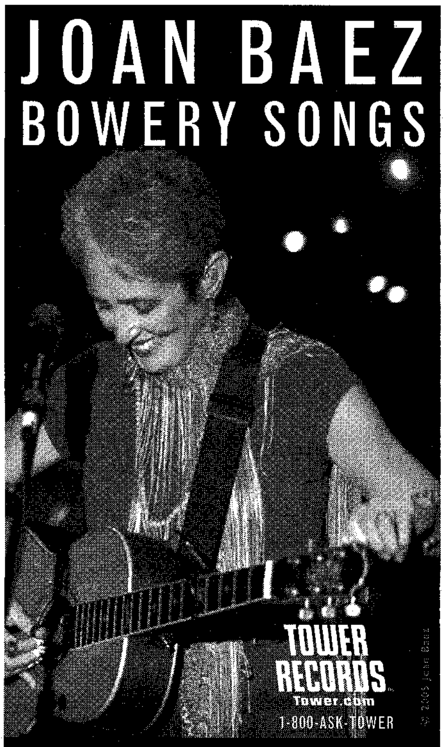

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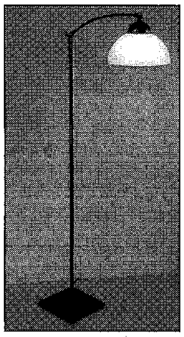

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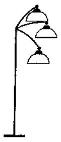

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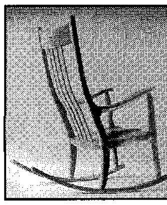

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pattern-stepped into bitterness, too. She'd complained about being named for a man (James Joyce), especially for a man whose own daughter had ended up a madwoman. But what ultra-feminine name had she wished they'd given her, what other rose would have gone better with her scuffed work boots and her black-framed glasses? He had no wand of malice; age alone had turned his wife into a failed ballerina, while genetic signals had resulted in her diabetes. He had determined nothing about his daughter's future by naming her Joyce; it was her own doing that made her what she was. He'd provided well for them, even after he'd stopped loving them. You could will yourself to stop (as he'd done upon hearing the revelations about Matt), or you could stop slowly, point the blades of your skates inward, so to speak, so that coming to a halt was done gracefully, sometimes unnoticed by you or by others. He thought of some lines from Byron:

> . . . I seek no sympathies, nor need;
> The thorns which I have reap'd are of the
> tree
> I planted: they have torn me, and I bleed:
> I should have known what fruit would
> spring from such a seed.

There it was! The thorns and bloodshed were a bit of a cliché, but look at the poet's real passion. To know something about oneself—that was what caused that pleasurable ache which put one in another state entirely. Too much time was lost trying to figure out other people.

There had been nights in recent years when he had sat awake, a tumbler in his hand filled with chilly Perrier (as a young man, he would have had a glass of brandy), reading to Matt. What did it mean that someone who appreciated poetry also appreciated, sexually, children? Oh, he supposed he knew that humans were "complicated," that they clung to exteriors, that they instinctively turned away from the illustrations in "Gray's Anatomy," which offered factual information about their inner selves; why did people have no interest in the real coherence of their inner workings, the rhythms of the muscles, the—all right—poetry of the vascular system? He knew that these were the thoughts of a peculiar old man, marginalized and dismissed for years, acerbically pronounced upon by his daughter. Guileless children told the truth? They did, but not so well as poets.

On his way back to the house, he picked up the day's mail. He found in the pile a newsletter from the A.A.R.P., a packet of coupons, a letter from a local charity, and—he almost dropped the flyer—a grainy photocopied picture: "MISSING PERSON," it read, and gave her age as sixteen. Last seen in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He remembered Audrey standing at his door. But could this be the same girl, if she was only sixteen? He held the page farther away, squinting. Audrey's eyes followed him as if he held a hologram. He wandered into the living room, debating whether to call the police yet again. Audrey's having been a friend of Matt's, her visit . . . all of it would be of interest to them. It was his obligation to call—he really should—but for the moment he thought that, actually, no one had done much for him lately, except to hassle him about rebuilding a pointless wall around a graveyard. It also occurred to him that he did not want to be the one to put another nail in Matt's coffin, so to speak: Matt's friendship with the disturbed teen-age girl could not possibly help his cause, whatever had or had not gone on between the two of them. Cahill decided that he could use a shower and a nap.

This many years after her death, he was still using his wife's Dove soap. Yellowed packages of it were stacked here and there, even in cannisters in the pantry. You discovered people's secret stashes when they died. The little, unknown things filled them in, as if they hadn't had quite enough dimension in life. Or perhaps those discoveries took them farther away, dried-out cigarettes and hidden half-pints reminding you that everyone was little known.

He turned on the fan and curled onto the bed, and when he awoke it was evening, and he was in a cold sweat. Sounds he'd been making had awoken him, and he struggled up so suddenly from a dream that he knocked his arm against the light. It was a dream, it had been a dream, but it had been so shockingly real. He went into the bathroom and splashed water on his face, but the water only intensified his already palpable dread. He all but ran down the stairs and across the lawn to the graveyard. He had dreamed that Audrey was buried there. Just hours earlier he'd seen that the ground was undisturbed, yet he had gone to sleep and smelled the newly dug soil, felt its graininess beneath his fingernails, stared wide-eyed at the fallen gravestones.

His horrific vision—the only one he'd ever had—turned out to have some validity, though it was wrong in the specifics. There was no sign of digging, but there were scratch marks in the soil, and the smallest of the gravestones was leaning toward the ground. But no: the ground had not been dug in. In the center of the plot—he could not stop a wry smile: dead center—was a pile of dog shit, immense in size. A mound of it. Napoleon! Some of Cahill's earlier handiwork had been toppled yet again, and he realized with embarrassment that his efforts had been slapdash.

He went back to the house and found Roadie standing in the hallway inside the screen door, holding his cap in one hand and a clipboard in the other. "Roadie," Cahill said.

"Yes, sir," Roadie said, replacing his cap on his head. It said "SHERYL CROW."

Cahill blurted, "Neighbor's dog just took a huge crap in my back yard. Really annoying."

"Dog's gotta do what a dog's gotta do," Roadie said.

"Right," he said.

Roadie cleared his voice. "Doc, I've talked to two people I respect, who've advised two different approaches to your porch situation. One thinks sliding thermal doors, and, for my personal opinion, it's more money but that's what I'd be inclined to go with."

"Then that sounds fine with me, Roadie," Cahill said.

"Approach No. 2, Doc, for full disclosure, this comes from Hank, down at Elbriddle's. He thinks . . ."

He let Roadie drone on. As a younger man, he might have studied the figures longer, asked more questions, but if it was Roadie's opinion that the first option was the best, he was inclined to go along.

"Awful about your friend," Roadie said suddenly, with no segue. "My wife said, 'Don't you be bringing that up, it's none of your business, and how do you think the doctor feels? Don't tell me that no-good didn't hoodwink him, because the doctor wouldn't have a tenant but what he thought he was an honorable man—'"

Roadie stopped, seeing that Cahill was numbed by this sudden outpouring. Roadie cleared his throat again—a nervous habit. He said, "Men like that ain't much liked by other men. Way I've always heard it, you'd get more sympathy from the jailbirds if you killed your mother than if you've fooled with a child. I've got Hannahlee and Junior, as you know. Any pervert touched a hair on their head, I'd be on 'em in one second flat. How do you suppose a guy like that seemed so regular?"

Silence. Finally, Cahill spoke. "Roadie," he said, "do you think I should undertake such a project at all, given my age? Do you think I'll last the winter to enjoy it?"

Roadie's tongue darted over his lips. "Well, Doc, you'd know the answer better than me. You in bad health?"

"No," Cahill said.

"Well, I ain't here to build if you think your money should best be used elsewhere, but a closed-in porch with a real one down at the end? That's something I'd spring for if I had the money."

For Roadie, this was tactful—turning the subject from death to money. Roadie made a fist and pounded a black ant racing across the table. "Something my wife said, she said, 'Roadie, you go over there and express some human kindness to the doctor. That's a man's done a lot for a lot of people, and, if he had a moment of misjudgment, you tell me who hasn't.' She says, 'Come to think of it, I guess time's proven me a fool for marrying somebody like you, needs this much instruction before he goes to see somebody who lost his wife and his friend!'"

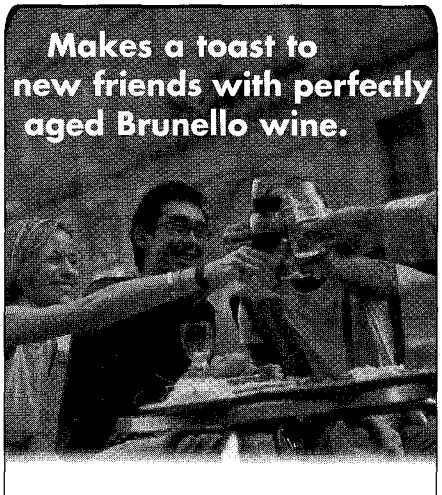
"She thinks herself a fool for marrying you?" Cahill said.

"You met Gloria Sue. Turns out she married me thinking I was going to build the Taj Mahal, or something. Where'd she get that? Nothing I ever told her."

"Do you love her?" Cahill said.

Roadie looked up, surprised. "Well, I don't know," he said slowly.

"I stopped loving my wife," Cahill said. "First, I thought I was just overloaded with all her minor annoyances—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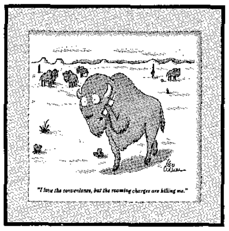
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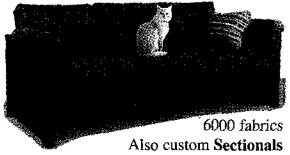

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snoring, refusing to take her diabetes medicine, the way she ignored the phone every time it rang. Half the time it turned out to be her sister."

Roadie looked sideways, kicking some grass off his boot. "That right?" he said. He took a deep breath. "Well, these plans here, Doc—you want to give me a deposit, I'll run down and get some things Monday morning?"

"No," Cahill said. He waited for Roadie's face to register surprise, which it did immediately. "But I will," he said, "because it seems like closing in the porch is betting against death. Today I feel like that would be a good idea."

"You do?" Roadie said nervously.

Cahill clasped his hands. "Roadie," he said, "how often do men speak frankly? I think some of the things we've just been talking about . . . We've spoken frankly to each other."

Roadie nodded silently.

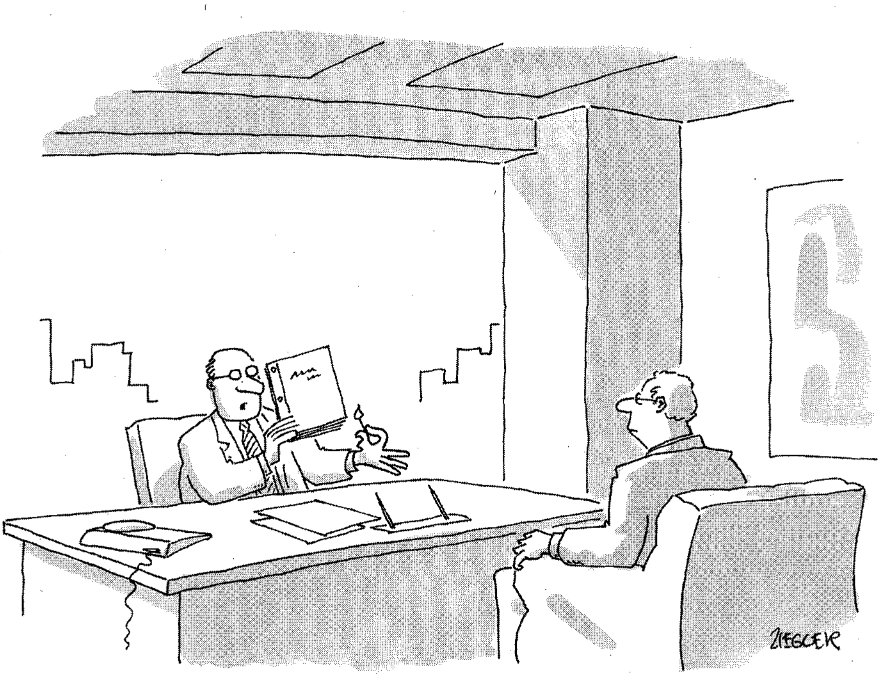
"One more thing," Cahill said. "I've never been a mystical person, but things change as you age. You'll find that out. Some things—people, even—disappear, then something else comes in to replace them." Cahill paused. "Life is like having a garden, Roadie, because inevitably the time comes when the deer eat everything, or you don't mulch and the soil gets exhausted. Right away, the weeds are in there. So I suppose what I'm getting at is that, well, tending your garden seems to me now like a young man's game. When you don't have the inclination or the energy or the . . . optimism to tend it anymore, the weeds rush in." He looked Roadie square in the eyes. He barely knew what he had said himself. He said, "The moment you stop loving something, the moment you're inattentive, the wrong things and the wrong people take over."

"That's one of the best ways of puttin' it I ever heard," Roadie said. "I'll go back to talk to Gloria Sue, try to tell her what we discussed. There's no way I'm gonna be able to put it like you did, though."

"Express it in your own way," Cahill said. "It seems to me you love her if you're going home to talk to her."

He went to the beach, a place he'd gone only once or twice, quite early in the season, and unfolded a chair and looked at the water.

He'd never called the police in response to the flyer. He'd never spoken a word to Breezy about what the dog had done in the graveyard. He tried to think philosophically: Audrey and Matt had been involved in whatever way they'd chosen—two losers, in any case, who were no good for each other; the dog was just a dog. People projected onto dogs, so they found themselves surprised when dogs acted like dogs instead of people.



*"These are the benefits you were guaranteed when you joined this firm—and this is a match."*

What did not change? Change was part of the natural process.

Coming to terms with what Matt had done, though, was difficult. It wasn't a matter of Matt's having been like his son, as Audrey had suggested, but, rather, that Matt seemed at times like a source of . . . what? Guidance? Ironic, thinking of what Matt might have guided him toward. But of course parents didn't tell their secrets to their children, just as the children withheld theirs from their parents.

"I didn't do it! I didn't do it!" little Joyce had cried, hand stained red, lipsticked "J"s all over the bathroom mirror, the bath tiles, even the toilet lid.

"You never really got involved," his wife had said, when she was still able to discuss his shortcomings. "If you don't get involved, you don't have to take responsibility. That was the way you always operated as a parent. As if you were the éminence grise, as if your family was just too much pressure. The aloof doctor."

The sadness of family life. The erosion of love until only a little rim was left, and that, too, eventually crumbled. *Rationalization:* he had been no worse a father than many. No worse than a mediocre husband. That old saying about not being able to pick your family until you married and had your own . . . People rarely remarked upon the fact that time passed, and you kept picking friends who were closer to you than family members; dogs you'd come to prefer to people. The next "family" in the line of succession could be a goldfish in a bowl, he supposed.

In front of him, a little boy in a wetsuit played with a fishing rod that dangled no lure, casting it all wrong, the way he'd learned to throw a softball. His mother and father sat on a blanket, their attention focussed on each other.

As the sky turned that indescribable silvery tone it often attained in late summer in Maine, Cahill rubbed his face and was surprised that his skin was still hot from the sun. A real Mainer would have worn his baseball cap. He slid a bit lower in his chair, and some time later was startled awake by squawking gulls. The charcoal-gray sky was flatlining a thin horizontal line of pale pink; the breeze had a bite to it. The couple and their child had gone, a bucket with a broken handle and a pile of shells left behind. He stood and folded the chair, scooping up his shoes with his other hand.

He drove home, appreciating what a pretty town this was, how the residents kept their houses in such good repair. Back home, he stashed the chair in the garage, where the garter snake who'd lived there contentedly for years slithered away behind piles of tied-up newspapers. His wife's plastic planters dangled from a beam, the few dried stems that remained deteriorating into dust. As he started up the walkway, he saw something suddenly dart past a bush at the side of the house, startling him so that he teetered for balance on the edge of the bricks. It was Napoleon, panting, big ears flapping.

"You listen here," he said to the dog, grabbing his collar. "You desecrated a graveyard, you—" He stopped, automatically rephrasing, in case he might not be understood. "You shit in the graveyard and knocked down the new wall!" he yelled. "You come with me."

He was dragging the dog across the lawn, though the animal dug down, clawing as if to score music, trying to stop the forward rush. The dog yelped as Cahill dragged him all the way to the wall, which was now even more caved in, though thankfully there was no more shit inside the enclosure. "Bad dog! Bad dog!" he said, jerking the collar. The dog risked further pain to turn his neck to look up at him, and what Cahill saw was fear. Fear and incomprehension. The sad squeaky sound went infinitely sharp, and Cahill realized he'd been intending to push the dog's nose against a pile of shit that was not his. It had been left by a much larger animal. Of course it had. Look at the size of the dog, and look at the pile of shit.

Instantly, he loosened his hold on the collar but stopped short of releasing it entirely, because of course the dog—any sane creature—would immediately run away.

"I'm sorry," he said, bending and putting his lips close to the dog's head, the smell of grass and dog mixed with a hint of . . . could it be lavender? "I'm sorry," he said staunchly, as if someone might overhear. Then, leaning in even closer, he risked letting go of the collar, whispering, "I misunderstood." ♦

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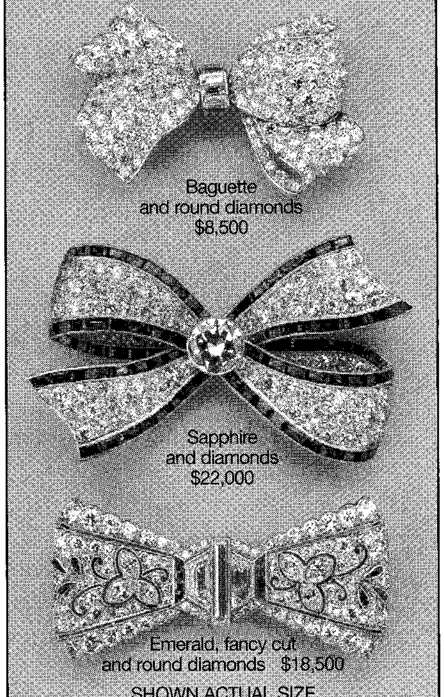

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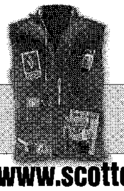

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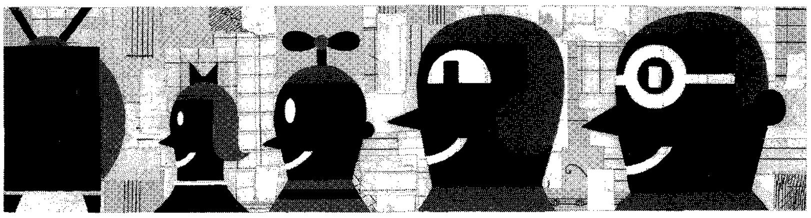
# THE CRITICS



### A CRITIC AT LARGE

# THE MOVIEGOER

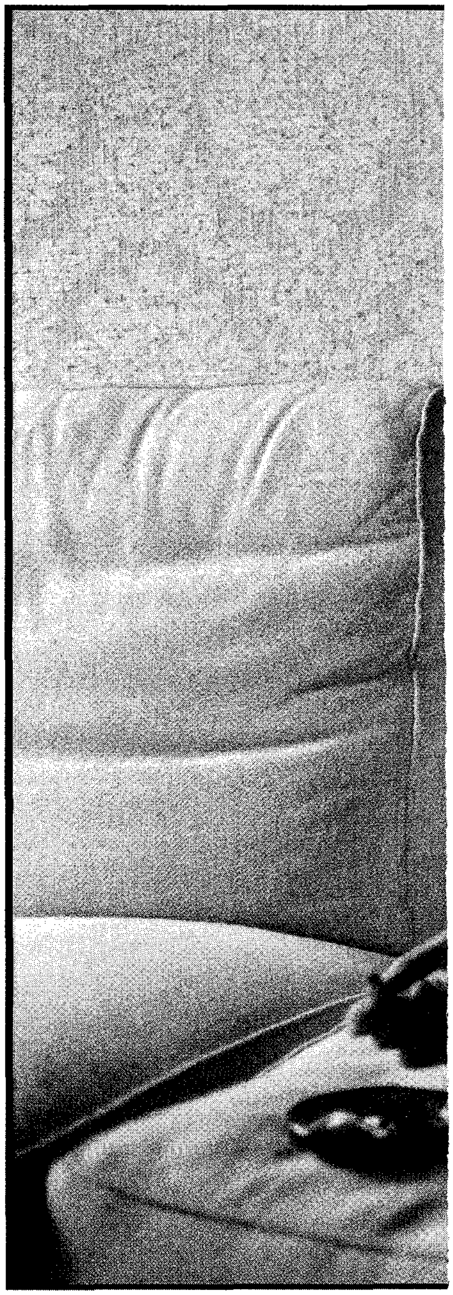
*Susan Sontag's life in film.*

BY DAVID DENBY

In late 1995, Susan Sontag, a devoted and often impassioned moviegoer, sorrowfully summed up the state of the art. "A Century of Cinema," an essay written for the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, and reprinted (in abridged form) in the *Times*, was an outraged lamentation for a hundred-year-old art form that was in "ignominious, irreversible decline." Setting out the reasons for the fall, Sontag mentioned the consumption of TV-size images at home replacing the awed reception of light by "kidnapped" strangers in darkened theatres; the catastrophic rise in movie-production costs in the nineteen-eighties; the tipping of the old balance between art and commerce "decisively in favor of cinema as an industry." All these forces, she wrote, were producing a "disincarnated, lightweight cinema that doesn't demand anyone's full attention." More than that, moviegoing itself had changed: the blessed state that Sontag called "cinephilia" had faded. Young people no longer arranged their emotional and intellectual lives around an art that was "poetic and mysterious and erotic and moral—all at the same time." They no longer fed their passions in blissfully uncomfortable revival houses with ill-sprung seats and dank odors.

The 1995 article was Sontag's last published piece on movies; in retrospect, it was her farewell to film criticism. Renunciation, along with such reverberant partners as epiphany, retraction, and reaffirmation, was one of her familiar dramatic modes. She brought a certain histrionic (i.e., Parisian) quality into American intellectual life—position-taking as existential drama—and, if you regard her seriously, the portentous turning points of her journey have to be endured. What she renounced, of course, was nothing like regular movie criticism. Sontag wrote only a dozen or so articles about film. Yet all of them were substantial, both as intellectual performance and as a challenge to conventional assumptions about movie form and routine reviewing. Available in her essay collections, the pieces remain events today—a limited, idiosyncratic, rather arrogant contribution to the short list of great American film criticism that includes the writing of James Agee, Robert Warshow, Manny Farber, Pauline Kael, and Andrew Sarris.

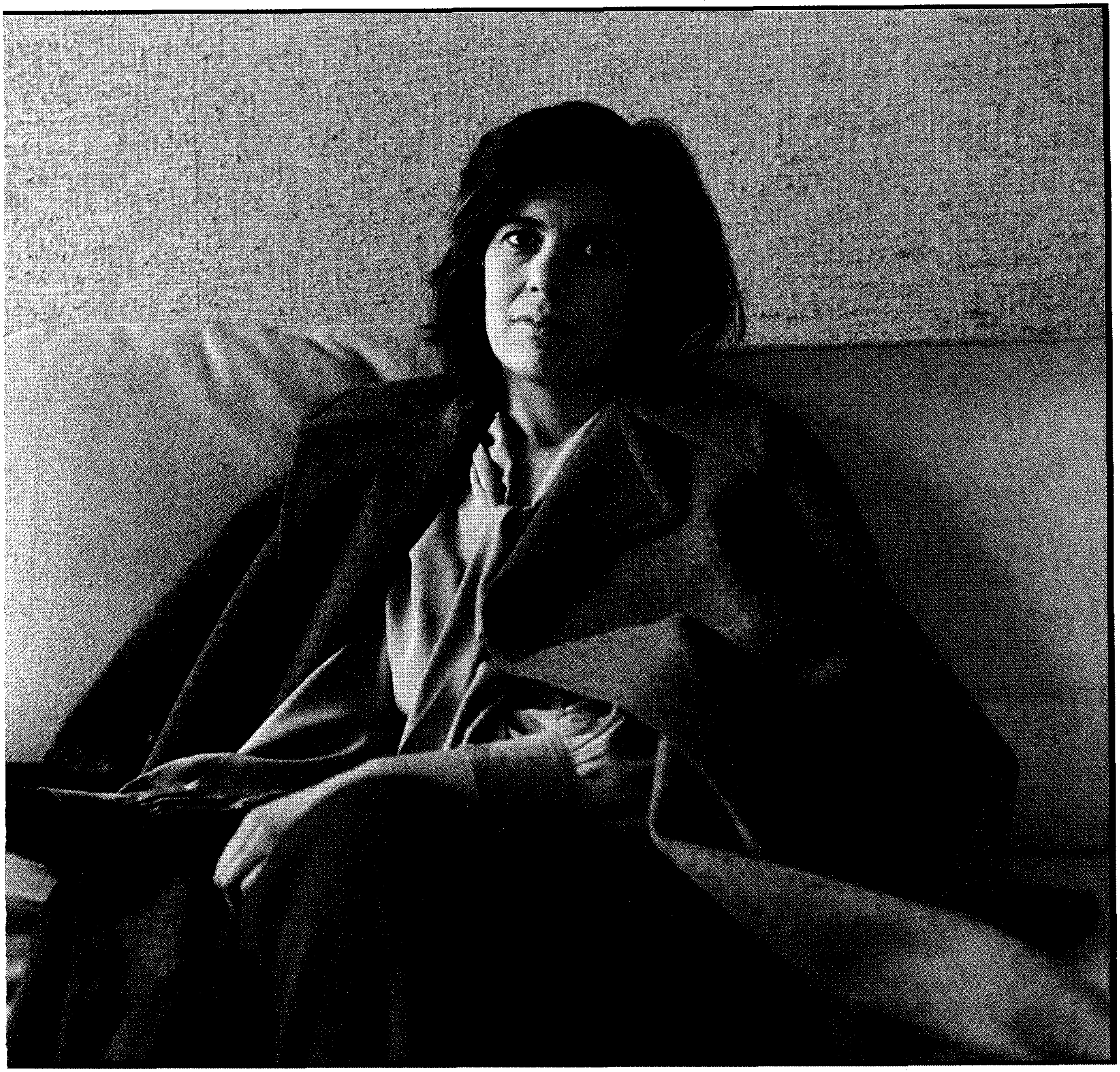
In Sontag's case, the movie criticism can be understood only as part of a lifelong obsession. In her forty years as a writer, she published fiction and plays; she wrote about literature, theatre, painting, music, and dance; she altered the discourse of illness and debated the aesthetics and morality of photography. She wrote fourteen books in all, and she had, in the last third of her life, an intermittent but much debated public presence as a political moralist and oracle. Yet the preoccupation with movies was there from the beginning, and it went deep. As a young woman, Sontag had done a little acting and worked as a movie extra. When she moved to New York, in 1959, at the age of twenty-six, her apartment was reportedly papered with movie stills. Her essay "Notes on 'Camp,'" which brought her amazingly wide notice when it was published, in 1964, in the small-circulation *Partisan Review*, was filled with references to classic and pop movies as well as to the other arts. Here was an ambitious literary intellectual who was equally at ease with "artists like Pontormo, Rosso, and Caravaggio" and a minor camp favorite like the green-eyed blonde Virginia Mayo. She did a lot of the homework for "Notes on Camp" at Daniel Talbot's revival house, the New Yorker, at Eighty-eighth Street and Broadway; copies of "Camp" and other Sontag essays were later distributed free at the theatre.



*Sontag in Paris in 1972. She exulted in the*

MAGNUM

That year, Sontag also sat for one of Andy Warhol's silent screen tests. Girl-



*se café life of speculative brilliance and harsh debate. Photograph by Henri Cartier-Bresson.*

ishly pretty at the age of thirty-one, she appears rattled by the requirement that she not speak. She's too self-conscious to engage the movie camera directly (as she engaged the photographer's lens in the devastating portraits of her that appeared on her book jackets), and she smiles shyly and casts her eyes up and down. It's an unnerved, coltish encounter. Later, with greater ease, she appeared as the subject of a German documentary, and as an articulate figure in social-issue documentaries (on feminism and on the imprisonment of Cuba's gay writers and artists). She also turned up, as herself, in Woody Allen's "Zelig," commenting in her cathedral tones on Allen's fictional creation. She worked for film-festival selection committees, and served on festival juries. And, bravely and foolishly, she put her movie love into practice, making four movies of her own. Why did film matter so much to her? What was it that she missed—and so sternly memorialized—in 1995?

In 1948, at the age of fifteen, Sontag, browsing at a newsstand just off Hollywood Boulevard, bought her first copy of *Partisan Review*. A fatherless, bookish girl, stranded amid the driver's-ed and typing classes of North Hollywood High, she was happy only in the company of a few like-minded students or at home, listening to music or reading Thomas Mann and German philosophy—"sipping at a hundred straws," she later wrote. *Partisan Review*, which was then at its peak, was more or less the house organ for the New York intellectuals, celebrants of high modernism, which, as they understood it, was marked by something unprecedented: an obsession with the physical means of making art (tone rows, dance movement, densely packed clusters of imagery), and by a formalism so radical that it carried art to the border of metaphysics. As a teenager, Sontag absorbed the doctrines and the canons. But by the time she came to write for *Partisan*, in the early sixties, the New York group believed that, with some exceptions—Balanchine's plotless ballets, the Abstract Expressionist painters—the great, long moment of high modernism was over.

Sontag disagreed. She never mentioned the New York intellectuals (Trilling, Kazin, Rahv, MacDonald, et al.) by name, but her line of attack was clearly directed at them. If they believed that classic modernism was exhausted, they did so, she thought, in a state of ignorance. Most of them, as Gore Vidal pointed out, didn't read contemporary French novels, and they had turned their backs on Sontag's beloved Paris. She had spent time there as a graduate student in 1958 and returned again and again—she even lived for a while, in the seventies, in Sartre's old apartment on the Rue Bonaparte. A beautiful and brainy young American abroad, she was a cross between a Jamesian heroine ("the heiress of all the ages") and Audrey Hepburn in "Funny Face" (1957). Hepburn's book-loving American girl goes to the City of Light, is pursued by the bearded, caddish founder of "empathicalism," and, in the nick of time, gets rescued from the lascivious European embrace by an American photographer (Fred Astaire—a Richard Avedon stand-in), who turns her into a model. Sontag, however, held on to her books; she was saved by Left Bank journals like *Les Temps Modernes* rather than by Givenchy gowns. She exulted in the intense café life of speculative brilliance and harsh debate, and she brought Paris to bear against the cultural pessimism of the New York group.

First, there were the French Surrealists and the highbrow pornographers and the literary madmen—Jarry, Céline, Genet, Artaud, Bataille, and Michel Leiris, not to mention the then anonymous author of "The Story of O"—all of whom the New York intellectuals had, in her opinion, undervalued. Then there were the theorists and practitioners of "the new novel," Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet, who had given up on "psychology" and three-dimensional characters moving through sequential stories, and instead floated their characters in a coldly objective world of things. And there was something else that most of the New York intellectuals, in their public funeral for modernism, had ignored: the cinema. Dwight Macdonald did write a film-review column for *Esquire* from 1960 to 1966, but most of them, if they went at all, sneaked off for a quickie before dinner. Movies weren't serious.

Sontag spent her life trying to grasp modernity, both as a specific series of developments in the arts and as the quintessence of experience in the violent and demoralizing twentieth century. Film was the new art of the century, and the greatest contemporary directors, going past mere representation and narrative, reformulated its language, expanding consciousness and emotion in the bargain. In 1968, in a long piece on Godard in *Partisan Review*, Sontag wrote that the director's "approach to established rules of film technique like the unobtrusive cut, consistency of point of view, and clear story line is comparable to Schoenberg's repudiation of the tonal language prevailing in music around 1910." Film, then, was the last great wave of high modernism. Or at least a certain kind of film, in which form became experimental and philosophically resonant: the movies of Resnais but not Buñuel, Bresson but not Dreyer, Godard but not Truffaut, Bergman's "Persona" but not Bergman's "Smiles of a Summer Night." In such works, film amounted to nothing less than the making of new forms and the making of souls.

The period of Sontag's first essays—the early sixties, before Pop became omnivorous and Vietnam obsessed everybody—was surely the last earnest moment in American culture. Entertainment conglomerates had not yet begun to control mass culture. Irony was a mode of aggression that separated the knowing from the saps, not a weak-backed accommodation to the undermining prolifera-

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## A COROLLARY

Someone, you finally realize, has suffered
your exact misfortune before you.

This one the steady vanishing
of your birthplace before your eyes.

As common and disordered
as a parent burying a child.

You stare down the slate-dark hole again—
this time seeing the blue swirls of precursors

grieving at a murky bottom.
One shouldn't outlive one's birthright:

after you, the feed store boarded,
shorn subdivisions advancing,

your grandchildren pulling their own
trailers to launch at sunrise. Here

Centralia's colliery still smolders like
fields of burning cane. The trees

stand dead but don't fall.
Veins in the Gulf will swell, too,

carrying grayed-out swirls—ghosts—
to greed's unbroken refrain.

—*Martha Serpas*

tion of media images and the levelling of cultural values. D. H. Lawrence and Freud were culture heroes, and sex, jubilantly heralded in its liberated form by Norman O. Brown as "polymorphous perversity," was an energized revolt against the allegedly deadening conditions of modern life. Sontag wrote for a vanguard audience that, a few years later, and considerably enlarged, fell in love with Woody Allen's culture-quoting farces and satires; part of the charm of her early work lies in its Gitanes-and-espresso period flavor, the exhalations of an unaffiliated intellectual trying to make sense of big issues and problems. It was a time when people did not think it absurd to demand something like redemption from art.

In 1961, Alain Resnais completed the ineffable "Last Year at Marienbad," in which handsome men and women in dinner clothes stand around in a vast sculpture-strewn hotel, demurely inquiring whether they met the year before. In a 1963 piece on Resnais, Sontag deplored the movie's sluggishness and the "insufferable incantatory style" of the narration. Yet she also welcomed the film as a startling formal experiment. What "Marienbad" meant—its content, as conventionally understood—was not the issue. "What matters in 'Marienbad,'" she wrote a year later, "is the pure untranslatable sensuous immediacy of some of its images, and its rigorous if narrow solution to certain problems of cinematic form." Resnais had pulled off a modernist hat trick: the static nature of the movie conveyed his notion of the irrecoverability of memory; the means by which the spectacle existed at all was what the movie was about. The same was true of another Sontag favorite, Antonioni's 1960 "L'Avventura," in which a "moral" narrative dissolves into a secondary, "amoral" one, a shift that embodies the dissolution of will suffered by the man and woman at the center of the movie; or, rather, their vanquished wills come to exist on the same plane as the rocks on a barren island and the empty de Chirico cityscapes of Sicily, where the film was shot. "L'Avventura" was a triumphant film equivalent of the "new novel."

Summoning the disruptive and heroic powers of high modernism, Sontag insisted that formal experimentation could "reorganize the audience's entire sensibility." Initially cast adrift by such narratives, we had to re-create ourselves in order to find our way home to meaning, to emotion. At first glance, the films of Robert Bresson, with their austerity and purity—their suppression of ordinary feelings and action—seem remote. The critic's task, Sontag wrote in a 1964 essay, was to "understand the aesthetics—that is, find the beauty—of such coldness." And to find the pathos in it, too. In Sontag's recounting, Bresson's ascetic Catholicism, by paring away the muck and clutter of conventional expressiveness, reveals the thrilling mystery of God's work—the extension of grace to a few humble and unwary souls. "The detachment and retarding of the emotions, through the consciousness of form," she wrote, "makes them far stronger and more intense in the end."

In these early celebrations of formalism, Sontag ignored the commonplace enticements of storytelling, acting, bodies, faces, movement. And she disdained the regular reviewer's beaverish practice of sorting good logs from bad, the many varieties of critics' patter and small talk—the jokes and casual anthropologies of popular taste. She was not in the game for fun. She had, it turned out, little interest in the American cinema, apart from its ability to offer up camp icons like Marlene Dietrich and Mae West, and aesthetically hapless but revealing texts like the bomb-haunted science-fiction films of the nineteen-fifties and sixties. When Godard and the other New Wave directors worked as critics, in their early twenties, they took up the American "auteurs"—Hawks, Ford, Nicholas Ray. But Sontag ignored them. Nor did she have anything to say, in the nineteen-seventies, about Scorsese, Coppola, Spielberg, and the other young directors of the American Golden Age. The international avant-garde—that's where the action was, that's where the nature of the medium itself was at stake. A paradox, then: in the essays collected in "Against Interpretation," written when she was young, Sontag spoke up for pop, for the Supremes and the Beatles, for outré and disreputable tastes, too, but her film criticism was invariably ambitious and furrow-browed. If a movie or a director's career was not a major event in the history of art, or at least of cinema, she did not write about it. To her credit, however, she never embraced the delusionary belief that an aesthetic

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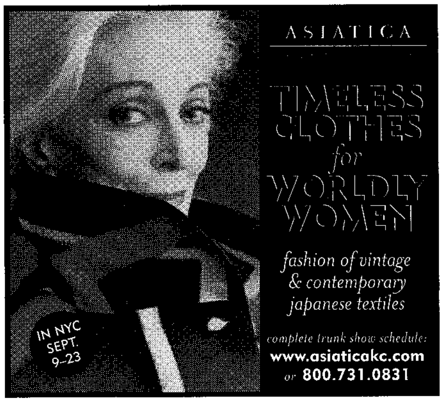
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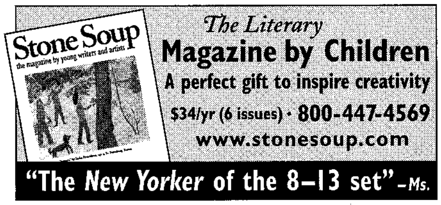
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revolution—a new art language—would somehow demystify and dissolve the bourgeois order. The revolution she wanted was personal, internal, singular. "For all my exhortatory tone," she wrote of the essays in "Against Interpretation," "I was not trying to lead anyone into the Promised Land except myself."

In "Against Interpretation," Sontag praised writers who, like the film critic Manny Farber, "reveal the sensuous surface of art," but her own practice was to find the skeleton beneath the skin. What were the philosophical implications of a movie's form? Raptly serious, even solemn, an aphorist without humor, a habitual didact who could wring thunderous meanings from silence, she demanded "the erotics of art" in a metaphor-free prose that was anything but erotic. At times, the moralizing aesthete came close to self-parody: "If we understand morality in the singular, as a generic decision on the part of consciousness, then it appears that our response to art is 'moral' insofar as it is, precisely, the enlivening of our sensibility and consciousness," and so on. Yet she was saved by an uncontrollable element in her temperament—a yearning for emotional experience, even for transcendence. Some of the early manifestos reach for extremes of pleasure or suffering—"excruciation" and "terror" became words of praise. She wanted to be overwhelmed, even humbled. At the movies, she always sat in the third row, right in the center.

As a critic of all the arts, she longed to discover and bring the news; her method was categorization and praise. She was an insistent maker of canons, alternate canons, renegade canons—the specialized tradition of Bosch, Sade, Rimbaud, and Kafka, for example, whose seriousness took the form of "anguish, cruelty, derangement." She may have rejected cultural levels, but she embraced intellectual hierarchies; she wanted to know who mattered in any given art form and where people ranked. The ardency of her desire for genius was both touching in itself and the secret of her popular appeal as a writer. Sontag's hunger made one eager to read more of her writing in the same way that Jeanne Moreau's pouty dissatisfaction made one eager to see what man could possibly please her.

Sontag's movie essays of the late sixties struck a note of exaltation that hadn't been heard in American film writing since the naïve rhapsodies of the First World War period, when D. W. Griffith made "The Birth of a Nation" and poets like Vachel Lindsay sang of the movies. Sontag's writing, however, was anything but naïve. Expounding, qualifying, debating, anticipating objections and retorts, she had become the most methodical of critical revolutionaries. With tempered elation, she laid out a radical program—the destruction of belief in conventional narrative, the devotion of film to self-reflexive "meta-artistic activities." In the future, she was sure, film would take up with ever greater intensity the modernist task of dramatizing its own expressive means. The twin poles of this activity were "the solemn, exquisitely conscious, self-annihilating structures of Bergman's great film 'Persona'" (1966) and Godard's seemingly slapdash methods, which were "much more light-hearted, playful, often witty, sometimes flippant, sometimes just silly."

In her 1968 piece on Godard, she summed up the director's early work (through the 1967 "Weekend") as an unstable compound of fiction, fantasy, lyrical essay, and literary quotation, in which "story" was a relatively trivial and expedient base upon which the most significant activity of the movie could be inscribed as commentary. In Godard's films, the realistic novel and the missing-fourth-wall theatre had been kicked over at last: realism and "content" had been dissolved into vivacious formal play. And among the elements generated by this breaking of forms were subjects and emotions previously unknown in movies:

> If film is, in Godard's laconic definition, the "analysis" of something "with images and sounds," there can be no impropriety in making literature a subject for cinematic analysis. Alien to movies as this kind of material may seem, at least in such profusion, Godard would no doubt argue that books and other vehicles of cultural consciousness are part of the world; therefore they belong in films. Indeed, by putting on the same plane the fact that people read and think and go seriously to the movies and the fact that they cry and run and make love, Godard has disclosed a new vein of lyricism and pathos for cinema: in bookishness, in genuine cultural passion, in intellectual callowness, in the misery of someone strangling in his own thoughts.

In order to "read" Godard's films, the audience needed to participate in disruption and artifice as a daredevil adventure. But Bergman's breaking of forms in "Persona" was something else—assaultive, alarming, even apocalyptic. The movie is about two women—a mute actress (Liv Ullmann) and a voluble nurse (Bibi Andersson)—who probe each other's limits while living together on a lonely island. The narrative stalls, and Bergman appears to be not just dramatizing the means of cinema but annulling them. We see a projector turned on at the beginning of the film, and, in the middle, there is a kind of caesura—the image of Andersson's face "catching" and burning, as if stuck in the projector's gate. It is a disturbing modernist epiphany. When Bergman returns to the narrative, the consciousness of the Andersson character, as Sontag says, has been drastically altered. So formal exploration stretched to its limits may lead not just to a dramatization of the means of making art but to the dissolution of such means, and the dissolution of consciousness, too. "The deep unflinching knowledge of anything will in the end prove destructive," Sontag says, summing up Bergman's idea. Pushing formalism into her favorite early mode—anguish—Sontag had, it turned out, taken film aesthetics as far into modernism as she could.

And then came the descent from inviolate analysis to the humiliating trials of craft. In the wake of Sontag's enthusiasm for "Persona," the Swedish film company Sandrews offered her a chance to make movies with Swedish technicians and actors. She quickly took up what she may have interpreted as a dare, but the two features that she made—"Duet for Cannibals" (1969) and "Brother Carl" (1971)—did not turn out well. In fact, they turned out terribly. (They can be seen at the Walter Reade on September 22nd.) In these stifling chamber dramas, small groups of characters prey on each other sexually, moving about like zombies in the dead air of a Stockholm apartment or on a semi-deserted island. Into the portentous void, lines of "sophisticated" dialogue ("I'm much less cruel than I used to be") awkwardly intrude. The themes are power, domination, the arbitrariness of sexual will; Sontag said that she wanted to create "anxiety," but, for the viewer, the anxiety is created mainly by her lack of skill. Lars Ekborg, who plays an arrogant revolutionary in "Duet for Cannibals," comes off as merely snide. Laurent Terzieff, as a dancer who has retreated into silence in "Brother Carl"—renouncing his art like one of the exemplary modernist ascetics (Rimbaud, Artaud) whom Sontag had celebrated in the essay "The Aesthetics of Silence"—has a big, goofy smile and long, floppy limbs. Grinning haplessly as he emerges from the woods, he seems less an artist in voluntary withdrawal than a crazed escapee from a grade-C horror movie. Sontag's lack of humor had caught up with her. (In "Unguided Tour," a film she made in 1982, a murmurous narration dawdles over pretty pictures of Venice as her friend the dancer Lucinda Childs, sometimes accompanied by a gentleman, impassively walks around the city.)

Sontag had run afoul of a banal but inescapable problem. A critic-aesthetician may campaign for the dissolution of realism in narrative, but there's no getting away from the glory and curse of the movies: cinema is a photographic medium in which people appear to be moving through real space in real time. That, of course, is an illusion, but the medium, apart from the genre of poetic experimental films, poses an immediate demand for authoritative representation that no other art is burdened by. The camera remorselessly revealed Sontag's inadequacy to represent anything at all. Watching "Duet for Cannibals," with its clumsy sexual fantasias and its possible dream sequences, one understands that to be a good fantasist one first has to be a good realist.

In retrospect, however, Sontag appears to have found a possible cinematic vocation in a film she made between "Brother Carl" and "Unguided Tour." In October of 1973, at the end of the Yom Kippur War, she led a camera crew to Israel. In the early sections of "Promised Lands," the documentary that resulted from this adventure, there are some very still shots—of perforated, burned-out tanks in the desert, of blackened, fly-specked corpses and cracked shoes—that attain an authority and a power as art that go way beyond anything else Sontag did in

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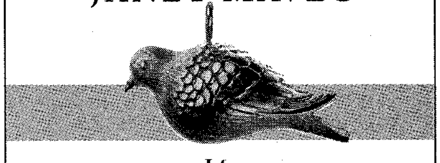

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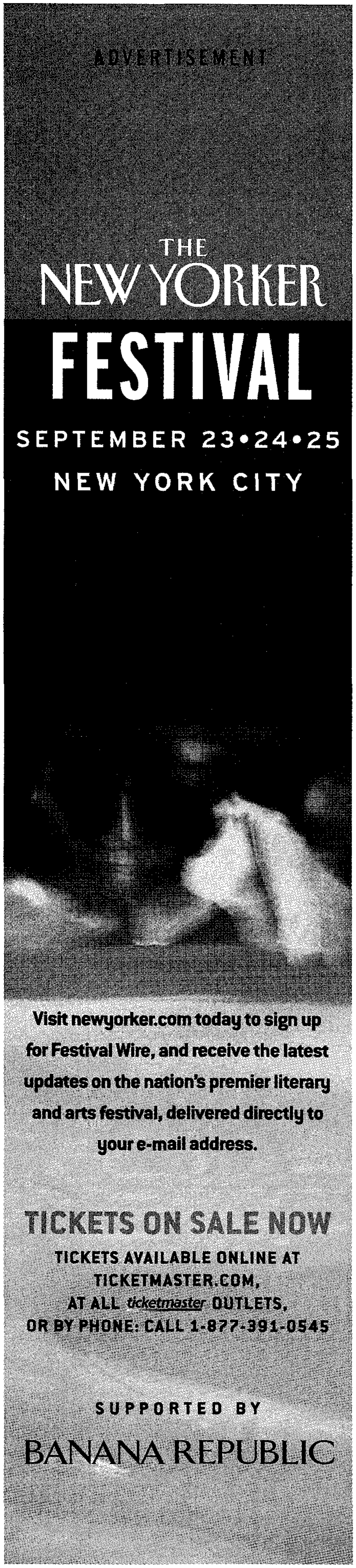
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the movies. Given her penchant for moral drama, documenting war and historical catastrophe might have been the right path for her. Years later, in her last book, "Regarding the Pain of Others" (2003), she acknowledged the dangers of voyeurism and moral self-aggrandizement, yet she still affirmed the absolute value of journalists' and artists' bearing witness to atrocity. Between 1993 and 1996, she made several trips to the embattled, sniper-ridden city of Sarajevo, and staged a production of Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" there, in the candle-lit Pozorište Mladih Theatre. Moviegoers may regret that she didn't make a documentary of the besieged city that she came to love.

Sontag liked to describe herself, paradoxically, as "a besotted aesthete" and an "obsessive moralist," and if the two selves were constantly at play, and sometimes at war, the moralist, though never quite effacing the aesthete, came to the fore in her later years. In 1965, she had nervously praised Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympiad" as works that "transcend the categories of propaganda or even reportage." She went on, "We find ourselves—to be sure, rather uncomfortably—seeing 'Hitler' and not Hitler, the '1936 Olympics' and not the 1936 Olympics. Through Riefenstahl's genius as a filmmaker, the 'content' has—let us even assume, against her intentions—come to play a purely formal role." But a decade later, in the startlingly combative essay "Fascinating Fascism," originally published in *The New York Review of Books*, Sontag referred to "Triumph" as a film "whose very conception negates the possibility of the filmmaker's having an aesthetic conception independent of propaganda." By the time she wrote "Fascinating Fascism" (and the essays included in her 1977 study "On Photography"), the youthful call for an "erotics of art" had been replaced by a demand for an ethics of art.

Sontag's shift to ethical advocacy produced such controversial public occasions as the 1982 Town Hall speech, in which she said farewell, once and for all, to any further sentimental illusions about Communism in power, even in such Third World countries as Cuba and North Vietnam, which she had earlier praised. She also served as the president of American PEN from 1987 to 1989, and in that role became an early supporter of Salman Rushdie, after the fatwa was issued against him. She did not take well to the intimidation of writers and could be snappish, even haughty, when challenged herself.

This shift in the tonalities of her writing was accompanied by a shift in geographical attention. Roland Barthes, Sontag's favorite contemporary author, died in 1980, and her role as an importer of literature and ideas from Paris abruptly came to an end. Her ambassadorial activity moved from Paris to Germany and Central Europe, from French brilliance and perversity to Middle-European soulfulness. She wrote essays on the German-language writers Robert Walser, Walter Benjamin, Elias Canetti, and W. G. Sebald. She wrote lovingly about the music of Wagner, in a piece that revealed an unsuspected appreciation of lyricism in art, and, in her last three major film articles, she took on Wagnerian works: the Riefenstahl propaganda epics; then, in 1979, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's "Hitler: A Film from Germany," a seven-hour Surrealist meditation on Hitler's place in German history and mythology; and, in 1983, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's "Berlin Alexanderplatz," a fifteen-hour movie made, in hour-long sections, for German television. These two films were summings-up—"posthumous" films, as she called Syberberg's end-of-culture monstrosity. In that same piece, she quoted Walter Benjamin's remark that "all great works of literature found a genre or dissolve one." Godard, Bergman, Syberberg, and Fassbinder, it turned out, had reached a series of stunning dead ends, dissolving not only genres but criticism, too. Sontag had run out of aesthetic revolutions. And the culture that supported revolutionary work had changed.

"Stripped of its heroic stature, of its claims as an adversary sensibility," she wrote in 1979, "modernism has proved acutely compatible with the ethos of an advanced consumer society." She was talking, of course, about what soon came to be known as postmodernism. "Art is now the name of a huge variety of satisfactions—of the unlimited proliferation, and devaluation, of satisfaction itself." Her hopes had fallen victim to the dismaying larger trend in which every radical development in modernism degenerated into routine: by the eighties, avant-garde techniques from the films of the sixties were showing up in commercials and music videos. Art had not only become commodified, as the Marxists like to say; it decorated corporate culture. The breaking of forms had led not to an agonized "reorganization of sensibility" but to an amiable shrugging off of seriousness in art and the levelling of all cultural activity. Like her long-ago mentors among the New York intellectuals, she had come to the end of the redemptive capacities of the avant-garde. When the breaking of forms no longer enlarged the soul, she gave up writing about movies—that was the disappointment behind the 1995 farewell to criticism.

But this chastened "late" mood should not be seen as a defeat. In her fiction, she had abandoned the dry experimentalism of her early works, "The Benefactor" (1963) and "Death Kit" (1967), and had written something much richer, "The Volcano Lover" (1992), a maddeningly attenuated but very juicy meditation on collecting, obsession, manners, violence, and sex. Much has been made of the alleged irony of this clarion avant-gardist shifting to quasi-realistic historical fiction in "Volcano" and in her last novel, "In America" (2000), but perhaps the shift was presaged by the tone of her early essays. In that yearning for transcendence, in the praise of sensuousness (a quality that she achieved at last in "Volcano"), in the desire that formalism offer a heady charge of emotion, an ardent, even deeply romantic temperament can be seen longing for an art that engulfs and devastates. This fiercely proud, even vain, woman was not afraid to acknowledge certain kinds of vulnerability and even error. Some of the early positions needed to be retracted. She hadn't, as she admitted to Joan Acocella in this magazine in 2000, actually enjoyed the experimental fiction by William Burroughs and Nathalie Sarraute that she had praised thirty years earlier, and "formalism" had very little to do with the things that she did enjoy—say, the dancer Joseph Duell's putting his hand before his face in Balanchine's "La Valse" in such a way that it stabbed her "through the heart."

Sontag's ambitious work in film criticism holds out heroic, if not always achievable or likable, goals for movies. For regular movie critics, it has served less as a model than as a set of ideas to react against. Yet it takes on difficult art with clarity and rhetorical fervor; it situates film art within all the arts; and it attempts to drive a shaft through American parochialism and self-satisfaction.

And Sontag continued to flourish as a movie-lover. Toward the end of her life, what she admired in movies was less a revolution in form than an affecting radical humanism—"inwardness" and "a cinema of personal dilemmas which are never resolved." After the 1995 piece came out, a few critics complained that she was merely memorializing the passions of her youth and failing to keep up with new developments. But, in talks and in interviews, she praised the humanist Russian director Alexander Sokurov, the Iranian Abbas Kiarostami, and the Taiwanese directors Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang. The hunger was still there, just in altered form. Sontag began her career as an intellectual celebrity by celebrating the mixture of high and low connoisseurship, but she reached the summit of her abilities as a writer with a portrait of an unabashed highbrow, eighteenth-century style, the collector Sir William Hamilton, whose love for antiquities and beautiful things, however precious, class-bound, and self-regarding, is the emotional and intellectual center of "The Volcano Lover." Connoisseurship of Hamilton's type is an inherently conservative act, tending toward the reaffirmation of highly defined pleasures. Sontag, it turned out, had a personal canon of about four hundred movies that she visited over and over at revival houses—Renoir's "Rules of the Game" and Kurosawa's "High and Low" were particular favorites, and she claimed to have seen Ozu's heartbreaking "Tokyo Story" thirty times. "There are passions which last forever," she told an audience of movie-lovers at the Japan Society in 2003. At the end of her life, working hard, and often ill, Susan Sontag went to the movies almost every day of the week. ♦

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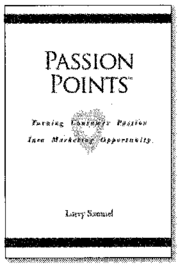

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BOOKS

# A CLOUD OF DUST

*E. L. Doctorow's "The March."*

BY JOHN UPDIKE

A number of readers, including this one, had a problem with E. L. Doctorow's best-known and best-selling novel, "Ragtime" (1975). Brilliantly written in a ricky-ticky ragtime prose, the book not only mingled the American celebrities of 1902 (Harry Houdini, J. P. Morgan) with the typical and the obscure (the narrator's upper-middle-class New Rochelle family, the tenement-dwelling Jewish artist Tateh and his daughter) but had the historical figures do things and achieve conjunctions that never transpired—the rich killer Harry Thaw stripping naked and banging his penis between the bars of his cell at the Tombs while Houdini watches, radical Emma Goldman relieving scandalous Evelyn Nesbit of her corset and giving her a loving oil massage. It smacked of playing with helpless dead puppets, and turned the historical novel into a gravity-free, faintly sadistic game. Doctorow is a stranger writer than he at first seems; his fiction, though generous with the conventional pleasures of dramatic plot, colorful characters, and information-rich prose, yet challenges the reader with a puckish truculence. His novels and short stories generally seek the shelter of a bygone period in which to take root; when they are set in the present, like "City of God" (2000), an imp of modernist experimentation and fantasy goes wild. Even his tenderest, most autobiographical, and least souped-up work, "The World's Fair" (1985), builds to a climactic scene in which naked women underwater are molested by Oscar the Amorous Octopus. His recent collection, "Sweet Land Stories" (2004), held five stories—four of them published in this magazine—that, like his novella "The Waterworks" (1994) and the prize-winning novel "Billy Bathgate" (1989), tingle with their injections of the murderous and the macabre.

His splendid new novel, "The March" (Random House; $29.95), pretty well cures my Doctorow problem. A many-faceted recounting of General William Tecumseh Sherman's famous, and in some quarters still infamous, march of sixty-two thousand Union soldiers, in 1864-65, through Georgia and then the Carolinas, it combines the author's saturnine strengths with an elegiac compassion and prose of a glittering, swift-moving economy. The novel shares with "Ragtime" a texture of terse episodes and dialogue shorn, in avant-garde fashion, of quotation marks, but has little of the older book's distancing jazz, its impudent, mocking shuffle of facts; it celebrates its epic war with the stirring music of a brass marching band heard from afar, then loud and up close, and finally receding over the horizon. Reading historical fiction, we often itch, our curiosity piqued, to consult a book of straight history, to get to the facts without the fiction. But "The March" stimulates little such itch; it offers an illumination, fitful and flickering, of a historic upheaval that only fiction could provide. Doctorow here appears not so much a reconstructor of history as a visionary who seeks in time past occasions for poetry. At the novel's outset, black slaves in Georgia see a brown tint in the sky, "as if the world was turned upside down":

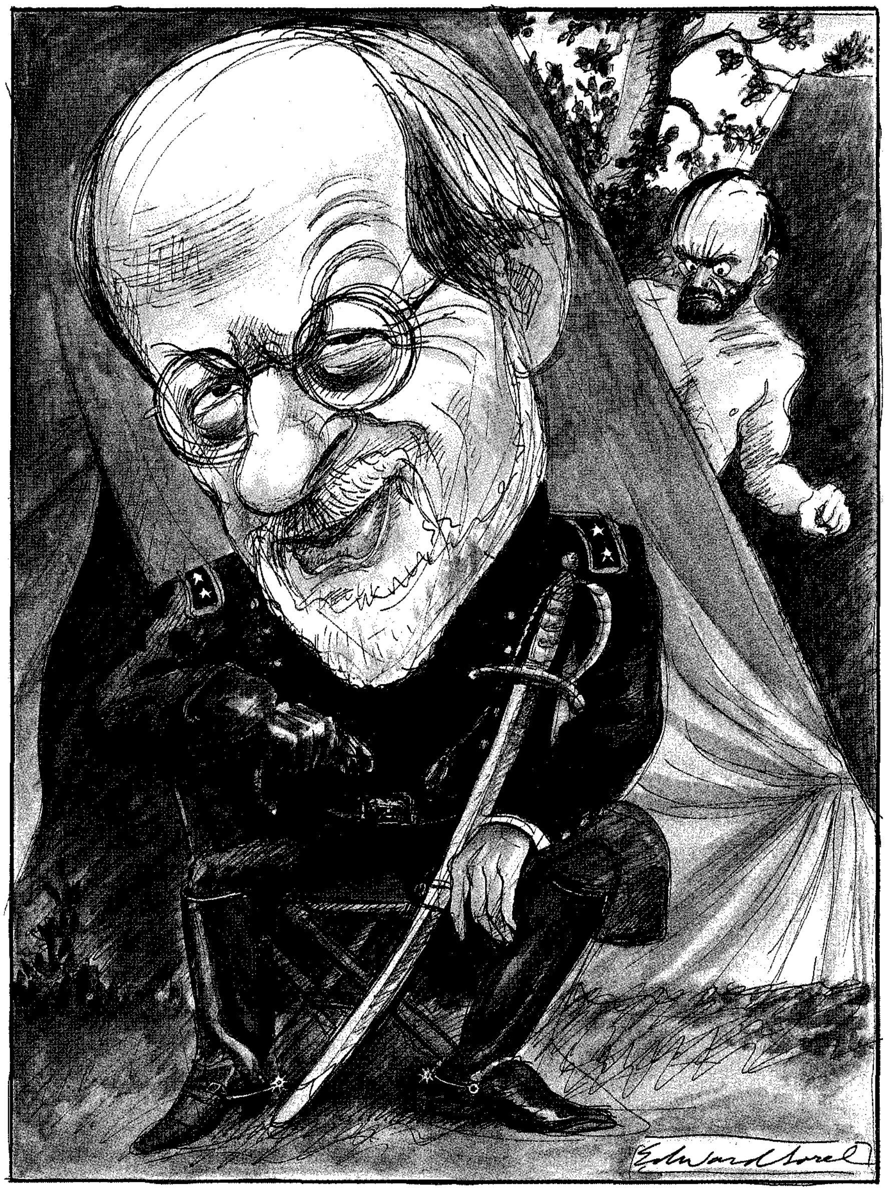
> And, as they watched, the brown cloud took on a reddish cast. It moved forward, thin as a hatchet blade in front and then widening like the furrow from the plow. . . . When the sound of this cloud reached them, it was like nothing they had ever heard in their lives. It was not fearsomely heaven-made, like thunder or lightning or howling wind, but something felt through their feet, a resonance, as if the earth was humming. Then, carried on a gust of wind, the sound became for moments a rhythmic tromp that relieved them as the human reason for the great cloud of dust.

Sherman's march is conjured up as a human entity as large as the weather, a "floating world" that destroys as it goes and carries along some living fragments. It is a revolution in motion—"On the march is the new way to live. . . . The world was remade, everything become something else"—bringing in its wake a crowd of freed slaves that reaches many thousands in number. It picks up a pair of Confederate soldiers, Will Kirkland and Arly Wilcox, who were waiting in prison to be executed, respectively, for desertion and for sleeping on picket duty, and who, released to fight in a battle, change into Union uniforms and are in turn captured by the Confederates and, in the fog of war, let loose again. Two respectable Southern women, Mattie Jameson and Emily Thompson, their homes invaded and abandoned, join the march and find employment and protection on the staff of an Army surgeon, Colonel Wrede Sartorius, a German-born "neatly put-together man who seemed inviolate in the carnage around him," and whom Doctorow readers have previously met as the embodiment of cold-blooded science in "The Waterworks." Among the black followers of the march are Emily's housemaid Wilma Jones, who is saved from drowning by a handsome banjo-playing enlistee in the Negro construction-working "pioneers"; his name is Coalhouse Walker, and he will be the father of Coalhouse Walker, Jr., the noblest figure in "Ragtime."

Mattie Jameson's husband, John, has fathered a child by a female slave, and the child, called Pearl, looks white, and passes for a time as a Union drummer boy. She acquires literacy and nursing skills on the march, plus the love of an Irish-American New Yorker, Stephen Walsh, who of all this horde of characters seems closest to Doctorow's own point of view—an illusionless skeptic, yet capable of courage and love. Walsh and Pearl head into the future, but part of their future's relative brightness rests on her apparent whiteness, a moral conundrum that afflicts her with a grave case of that twentieth-century complaint, liberal guilt. Her name borrowed from the elfin child in Hawthorne's masterpiece, her presence dusted with the magic realism of a Toni Morrison novel, Pearl is hard to picture, though we are assured that she becomes beautiful. She also becomes almost superhuman; in the aftermath of a battle, she reunites Mattie, by now a widow, with her only surviving son, while briskly lecturing both of them on their past sins under the slave system.

Pearl is the most sympathetic character in "The March," the one we root for, but her ability to do everything right opens the author to the charge of sentimentality, to which white writers on the evils of slavery are understandably prone. There is not an unkind or unwise black character in the book. One old plantation owner is allowed a speech, harsh with self-righteous paternalism, of some eloquence, but John Jameson personifies the slave system's inhuman brutality: as the march approaches, he sells off a dozen field hands with the vow "No buck nigger of mine will wear a Federal uniform, I'll promise you that," and he turns out the docile and elderly Roscoe with the explanation that he'd "got the best out of Roscoe and what was left wasn't worth providing for." Doctorow offers, through the mind of Stephen Walsh, a dystopian vision of a South where the institution was perpetuated indefinitely:

> In this strange country down here, after generations of its hideous ways, slaves were no longer simply black, they were degrees of white. Yes, he thought, if the South were to prevail, theoretically there could be a time when whiteness alone would not guarantee the identity of a free man. Anyone might be indentured and shackled and sold on an auction block, the color black having been a temporary expedient, the idea of a slave class itself being the underlying premise.



*Doctorow's novel is a many-faceted recounting of Sherman's march through the South.*

The march also collects, to round out this partial roll call, a black child, David, who flees the plantation mansion to attach himself to an English journalist and reluctant foster father, Hugh Pryce; and a black photographer, Calvin Harper, who is partially blinded in saving General Sherman's life, a deed for which he receives no thanks and is nearly executed. Sherman himself, the directing brain behind the great plow-shaped cloud of dust, makes an unprepossessing first appearance, on a horse too small for him, "so that his feet practically touched the ground. He was not at all military-looking, with his tunic covered with dust and half unbuttoned, and a handkerchief tied at his neck, an old beaten-up cap, and a cigar stub in his mouth, and a red beard with streaks of gray." Doctorow's leftish anti-establishmentarianism does not, as "The March" moves from the realm of freed slaves and disenfranchised women up into the councils of the powerful, indict the leaders of the Union. Sherman is portrayed as an insomniac brandy-tippler with an odd fondness for a soldier's spartan life, but his fire of purpose and his strategic intelligence are admired as heroic. He sheds a deflected paternal love on little Pearl when she is masquerading as a drummer boy, gallantly receives his enemy General Joe Johnston as a fellow-member of the West Point aristocracy, and shows a theatrical literary streak that is endearing. He is openly emotional, telling Pearl, "Sometimes I want to cry, too." As the novel approaches its end, and its fiction becomes more historical and less visionary, Sherman and Grant and Lincoln have a shipboard conference on the James River. The effect is as gentle as a salted-paper print, and the conversations are scarcely more than a murmur. Seen through the eyes of Wrede Sartorius, who is present, Grant is "rather short, stocky, brown beard of a thick texture, a quiet man clearly not interested in making any kind of impression, unlike Sherman, who didn't seem to be able to stop talking," and Lincoln is "someone eaten away by life, with eyes pained and a physiognomy almost sepulchral." The doctor professionally observes that "Grant's color was good, and his eyes only slightly bloodshot," and Lincoln, who wears a shawl and "the weak, hopeful smile of the sick," may have "some sort of hereditary condition, a syndrome of overdeveloped extremities and rude features." It measures the

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book's largeness of sympathy that, unsparingly and repetitively as it details the carnage of the Civil War—"war at its purest, a mindless mass rage severed from any cause, ideal or moral principle"; a "monumentality of human disaster"—it spares respect and even affection for those whose decisions propel the ordeal onward. An especially poignant glimpse of leadership in action comes early in the book, and involves "boys from the Georgia Military Institute who had been given the honor of bearing the brunt of an attack":

> Over on the other side the terrain was less swampy, and in the mossy glades Milledgeville cadets lay dead or wounded behind their logs and mounds of earth. Boys without a scratch on them wandered in a daze. Some were crying. Cadet officers went among them, pushing them back to their positions, slapping them, to make them obey.

Doctorow, at ease in the nineteenth century, demonstrates an impressive familiarity with military logistics and tactics prior to fully mechanized warfare, including the grim fate of horses, who not only suffer battle wounds but are slain by the armies to make way for newer ones. Arly explains, "An army works its animals near to death so on a re'glar basis it rids itself of its consumed-up animals." The smell of their many bloated corpses on the banks of the Cape Fear River in Fayetteville is terrible. The floating world of the march, with its sixty thousand unbathing men and all their excrement, can be smelled at a distance. Emily, setting out to become a camp follower, "knew the direction the armies had taken. You just followed the roads that were beaten down, and before long you would hear a sound not natural to the countryside. And then you would smell them." Medical procedures of the time are rendered with special, well-researched fidelity, and they include not only the lightning-fast amputations of the field tent but a delicate, truly clinical detail unique in my reading of sex scenes: virgin Emily about to give herself, after long infatuation, to Wrede Sartorius, "heard him open his instrument case. To spare you pain, he said, standing above her, I will do this small procedure. You will feel only a slight sting. And she felt his fingers dilating her, and then it was just as he said, and there was no blood to speak of."

The writing, solid and speedy in the modern manner, is subtly tinged with older usages. Sherman reflects upon "our civil war, the devastating manufacture of the bones of our sons." Grant observes that the President "can only wait on our news, sitting in Washington without the hell-may-care that comes from a good battle." One battle carries into "the declivitous patch in sight of the plantation house." Birds sing "softer, twittier songs, like the birds knew full well what a fearful war was around them." Asked by Arly, "Are you for religion, young Will?," Will answers, as naturally as you please, "I never did countenance it." Victorian fancywork inflects the narrative voice: "The city of Fayetteville was of a dark blue aspect, as if the abstract color had found an organic vestiture for itself." The voice of the black South, which comes on heavy in Pearl's early appearances ("Nobody doan never have touch Porhl! When I little, de brudder try. Oh yeah. I raise up dis bony knee hard in his what he got dere, and dat were dat and nobody since!"), is lightly caught in such a piece of dialogue as Wilma's saying, "Judge Thompson's who I was bound to." Arly, who turns out to be demented as well as highly verbal, sports the rhetoric of the white South as he expostulates to innocent Will on the joys of copulation:

> "And when we go inside them, plum into their beings, and they cry out in our ear and we feel there is nothing softer, warmer, or more honeyed up in God's world than what embraces our stiff tool, and we are made by God to shiver into them the issue of our loins, well, boy, don't talk to me about what you don't know."

Poetry enters prose in such a simple surreal touch as Emily noticing, of her dead father's face, "With the eyes closed, the nose seemed to grow," and in such a simple description of physical desolation as "She had turned into the spacious yards of a manse that had seen some fire. The front was scorched, the roof shingles half torn away, and tree vines out front hanging black and limp like dead snakes." "The March" carries us through a multitude of moments of wonder and pity, terror and comedy, to the triumph of Southern surrender and the sudden tragedy of Lincoln's assassination. Sherman's march is large enough, American myth enough, to pull even a laggard recruit along, and to hold Doctorow's busy imagination fast to the reality of history even as he refreshes our memory of it. ♦

# BRIEFLY NOTED

Desertion, *by Abdulrazak Gurnah (Pantheon; $23).* At the heart of this novel, by a writer who has been nominated for the Booker Prize, is an Arabian-inspired tale of two pairs of lovers in the perilous ethnic and political landscapes of East Africa. In 1899, a young English Orientalist gets lost in the East African desert, is rescued by a Muslim shopkeeper in "a crumbling town on the edge of civilised life," and falls in love with the shopkeeper's sister, Rehana. This leads her to a "life of secrets and sin," and the pattern is repeated two generations later, in the forbidden attachment between Rehana's granddaughter and her lover. None of the lovers can overcome the crippling prohibitions against their love. But the affecting story of their failure allows Gurnah's self-consciously erudite narrator to bend their lives into a meditation on African history, estrangement, and loss.

Indecision, *by Benjamin Kunkel (Random House; $21.95).* Twenty years ago, Don DeLillo, in "White Noise," created a character so beset by morbid anxiety that she begins taking pills that obliterate the fear of death. In our era of precision-targeted psychotropics, this scenario no longer shocks; it's drearily plausible. For similar reasons, the satirical springboard of Kunkel's first novel—a neurotically aimless New Yorker takes medication that he believes will instill in him the ability to make commitments—is rather creaky. Moreover, the Big Pharma plot only partially masks the fact that this is yet another novel in which a charming, Nick Hornby-style layabout is mechanically cajoled into semi-maturity. Kunkel's narrator has an appealingly rascally voice, and the author is expert at depicting highbrow buffoonery—at an all-night Ecstasy party, flesh and philosophy commingle to hilarious effect—but the book, for all its crisp prose, can't escape the staleness of its conceit.

War Reporting for Cowards, *by Chris Ayres (Atlantic Monthly; $23).* A twenty-seven-year-old hypochondriac, Ayres managed just nine days as an embed in Iraq before retreating to a luxury hotel in Kuwait, and his book is principally about the serendipitous career path that landed him in the back of a Humvee. With self-deprecating wit, he recollects his days as a newsroom intern and then as a reporter covering the dot-com boom for an English paper. He dates his vocation as a war correspondent to the collapse of the Twin Towers and the receipt of an e-mail from London requesting a "thousand wds please on 'I saw people fall to death,' etc." When the Iraq invasion began, his editors dismissed embedding as a diversionary ruse by the U.S. Army, and put their veteran correspondents far from the front lines, leaving Ayres with an American artillery unit nicknamed Long Distance Death Dealers. Facing his own death during an ambush by Iraqi tanks, Ayres admits that he feels like a coward not "for being *scared* of war" but, rather, "for agreeing to go to war" and letting "my journalist's ego get the better of me."

Garbage Land, *by Elizabeth Royte (Little, Brown; $24.95).* Royte is a journalist with a nose for the "sordid afterlife" of trash, thoroughly at home in the putrid world of "Coney Island whitefish" (used condoms); "disco rice" (maggots); and—the darling of American consumer culture and the nemesis of waste activists—"Satan's resin" (plastic). Her book takes the form of a quest for the surprising final resting places of her yogurt cups, beer bottles, personal computer, and organic-fig-cookie packaging, and leads to an impassioned attack on overconsumption in America. If Royte does not quite demonstrate the muckraking skills of an Eric Schlosser in "Fast Food Nation," she does expose the feculent underside of our appetite for things and challenges her readers to disprove the resigned assessment of a former New York sanitation commissioner: "In the end, the garbage will win."

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### THE CURRENT CINEMA

# PARTNERS

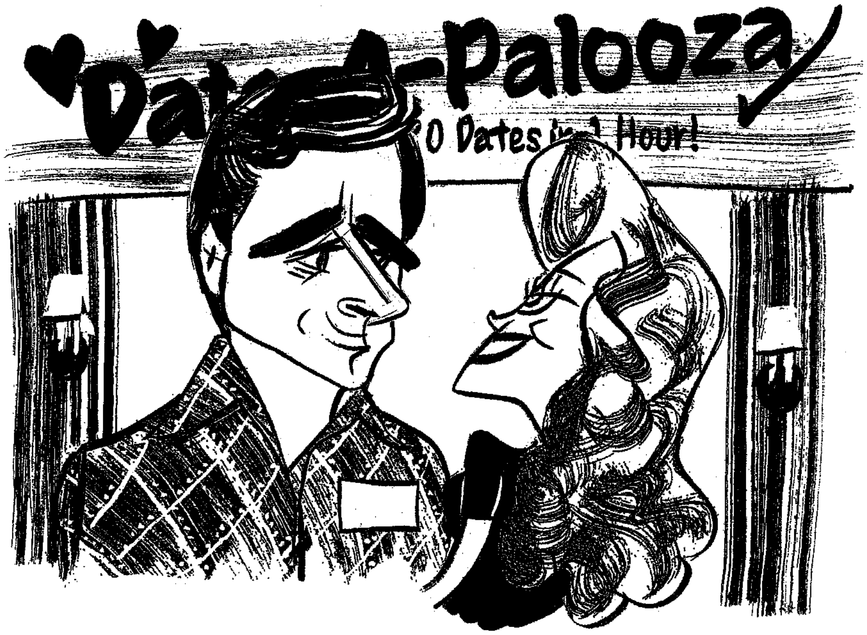
*"The 40-Year-Old Virgin," "March of the Penguins," "Red Eye."*

BY DAVID DENBY

One way or another, sex is always in the head. It's clear from the opening gag of "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" that Andy Stitzer (Steve Carell), the gentle fellow who finds himself in so unhappy a state in early middle age, is not impotent. Anything but. Yet Andy is definitely a head case. His story goes something like this: he got frightened when he was still green (we see an encounter with an eager teen-age girl who sports scary steel braces on her teeth), and thinking about his fear made him more frightened; years later, his anxieties have snowballed so heavily that he's permanently flummoxed. He won't even go near a woman.

One of the nice things about this lewd and funny hit comedy is that it springs its wildest, most scabrous jokes from a recognizable male dilemma. Gentility, not to mention sophistication and indirection, has departed from our raucous culture forever, but, if we are going to have our comedies dirty, they might as well be human, too. The Dickensian moniker Stitzer, with its suggestions of "stiff," "zipper," and "stitched," tells us what Steve Carell and Judd Apatow, who wrote the movie together, want us to think of their hero: he's aroused but all locked up. Carell makes him a pleasant-looking guy with a too bright smile that flashes nervously, a man who has more testosterone than he knows what to do with; his overexercised chest bristles with thick, dark hair—it's a jungle cry in itself. But Andy's inhibitions go so deep that he can't say what he thinks about anything, much less about sex; he clings to blandness as a kind of safety. The movie treats this modern Caspar Milquetoast tenderly: there's really not much wrong with him except that he's missing the only heaven that God, in his wisdom, granted us on this earth.

In the past thirty years or so, ever since "Saturday Night Live" went on the air, performers from late-night television have attempted to charge up the movies, not always with happy results. Some of the comics and comedy writers who jumped from one medium to the other have landed on their heads, turning out work that was gag-centered, fitful, and skittish (in both senses). Except for a few inspired sequences, last year's "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy," which involved some of the same TV-based talents as "Virgin," was a klutzy mess. But Judd Apatow, who produced "Ron Burgundy," directed this time, and he has developed a rhythm that sustains a long movie. Much of the comedy is as coarse and obvious as a burlesque show and almost as foul-mouthed as "The Aristocrats," but, within the broad license that Apatow allows himself, he works with considerable delicacy, psychological insight, and a surprising sense of detail. "Virgin" may be a one-joke movie, but a variety of comic styles get packed into the joke. Steve Carell (from "The Daily Show") is now about halfway between a TV comic doing traits and gags and a good actor who happens to be funny. Like all comics, he trusts laughs, and he makes Andy a mass of tics, twitches, and pratfalls. Here and there, however, a man's pained temperament steps out from behind the professional comic's armature—a touch of wounded dignity, of yearning for peace and quiet as well as for love. The only thing a forty-year-old virgin needs more than sex is to be left alone—that's why he's still a virgin. Carell understands that agonizing ambivalence.



*Steve Carell as the lonely guy Andy Stitzer goes to a dating parlor.*

Apatow surrounds Carell with a large, exuberant cast, beginning with the actors who play Andy's fellow-workers at a large San Fernando Valley electronics store—the gentle-giant bearded comedy writer Seth Rogen, the speedball rapper and actor Romany Malco, and the unpredictable Paul Rudd, who has a crazy streak lurking behind his good looks and friendly smile. Andy's friends want to help him find a girl; they are full of stupid schemes, the point being, of course, that they are even more screwed up in their relations with women than he is, and delusional as well. The group scenes with Carell and these noisy clowns were mainly improvised (the best takes were edited together), and they're full of odd corners and curlicues—for instance, a quasi-obscene phrase passed back and forth among them and elaborated into a kind of bizarre verbal monument that they all stare at in wonder. Each of these madcaps also gets a number of extravagant solo arias—Malco, in particular, lets loose a couple of sex rants so preposterous that he seems to have distilled them from the boasts of a dozen losers topping one another on street corners. Apatow appears to be a generous director and a great fan of comic talent. Elizabeth Banks and Leslie Mann have good bits as predatory women who terrify the hero, and Jane Lynch, as the tough boss at the electronics store who suddenly softens and takes a shine to Andy, breaks into a tender Guatemalan love song—an unexpected gift, and exquisitely sung, too.

"The 40-Year-Old-Virgin" is a hit, I would warrant, because it's truly dirty and truly romantic at the same time, a combination that's very hard to pull off. The romantic part comes alive every time Catherine Keener is on the screen. Keener has a big smile and a husky laugh, and she's warmer, more welcoming than usual. She plays Andy's new friend, who's a real woman—that is, she's loving, and she's trouble, too. The movie leaves us with the grateful realization that, for a man, love and trouble are worth having more than anything, and it ends with a triumphant double coda that brings the jokes down to earth with a touch of sexual realism and then sends them off again with a flight of lyrical fantasy.

Are we imitating them, or are they imitating us? The hugely successful French documentary "March of the Penguins" yields itself so readily to anthropomorphic readings that it's hard to say where bird ends and man begins. With a reassuring *smack!,* the penguins emerge, one after another, from the ocean and hit the ice. It's the first stage of what the movie presents as the routine, annual sublime—the trek across seventy miles of Antarctic wasteland to the thick-iced mating ground. As they shuffle across the terrain with bowed shoulders, the penguins look, from the rear, like shtetl Jews heading off to shul. Flopping to their bellies for greater speed, they could be kids taking a wave on a surfboard. When male and female find a partner, they stand with heads bowed before each other in what appears to be silent adoration. If we are moved, are we experiencing what they are feeling or what we are feeling? After some demurely photographed funny stuff, a baby is conceived. The egg is then transferred from mother to father, and, as the dad huddles for warmth with the other dads, balancing his package on his toes, the mom makes the long journey back to the water to eat, returning when she is ready to feed her hungry chick. Such scrupulous and selfless devotion to children would not seem out of place in lacrosse-mom precincts like Glen Cove or Montclair. Yet here's the miracle: the extreme coldness and clarity of the air, and the translucent blues and searing whites of the landscape, lend the ritual, however mundane, familial, and instinct-driven, an aspect of eternal splendor. And, given the extreme difficulties that the filmmakers (led by Luc Jacquet) must have endured, the entire moviemaking enterprise has an aura of heroism, too. A perfect family movie, a perfect date movie, and one of the most eye-ravishing documentaries ever made.

In 1967, the Italian director Elio Petri made a film called "We Still Kill the Old Way." Well, the veteran American director Wes Craven still kills the old way, too. His dandy little thriller "Red Eye," which is exactly eighty-five minutes long, has been made with classical technique and bravura skill, and it's leaving moviegoers in a rare state of satisfaction. (The absence of people whizzing through the air on green wings or deliquescing into corpses and coming back to life again has been much appreciated.) When the beautiful young hotel manager Lisa Reisert (Rachel McAdams) gets picked up at the Dallas airport by a handsome fellow (Cillian Murphy) who jokes about his name—Jackson Rippner, as in Jack the Ripper—we're alerted to danger by his overfriendly manner, and by the joke itself, which would seem to be unnecessary if he weren't trying to reassure Lisa of his harmlessness. But the screenwriter, Carl Ellsworth, doesn't tell us too much. He knows that for the audience the pleasure of this kind of filmmaking lies in taking the bait and then being slowly but inexorably reeled in. Cillian Murphy, who has angelic looks that can turn sinister, is one of the most elegantly seductive monsters in recent movies, and Rachel McAdams has large, doll-like features that mask a surprising amount of calculation and rage. As Murphy sits down next to her on an airplane, the movie turns into a complicated duel that depends on precise observation of physical detail and moment-by-moment continuity so closely calibrated that it's impossible to find a wasted shot or an exaggerated emotion. Craven, who made "A Nightmare on Elm Street" and the "Scream" series, has a slightly off-center wit. As Murphy and McAdams are engaged in a death struggle in the airplane's toilet, a huffy stewardess disapproves of what she takes to be an inappropriate use of a public facility. The joke is almost worthy of Hitchcock. ♦

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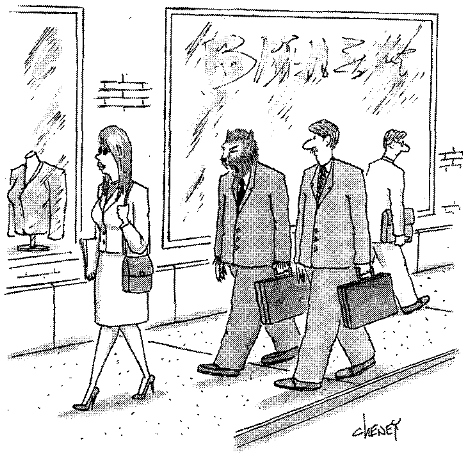
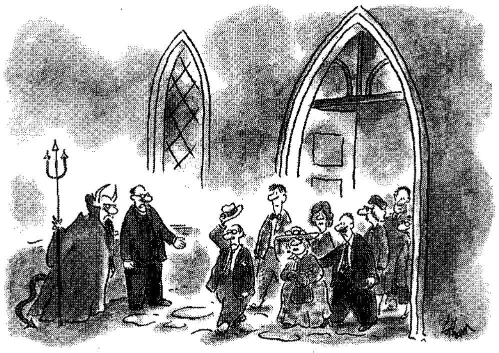
## CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

*Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Jack Ziegler, must be received by Sunday, September 11th. Finalists in the August 29th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the September 26th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.*

### THE WINNING CAPTION



*"Oh, sure, they find one secretary in a pool of her own blood and everybody wants to blame the werewolf."*
Sarah Bell, Marblehead, Mass.



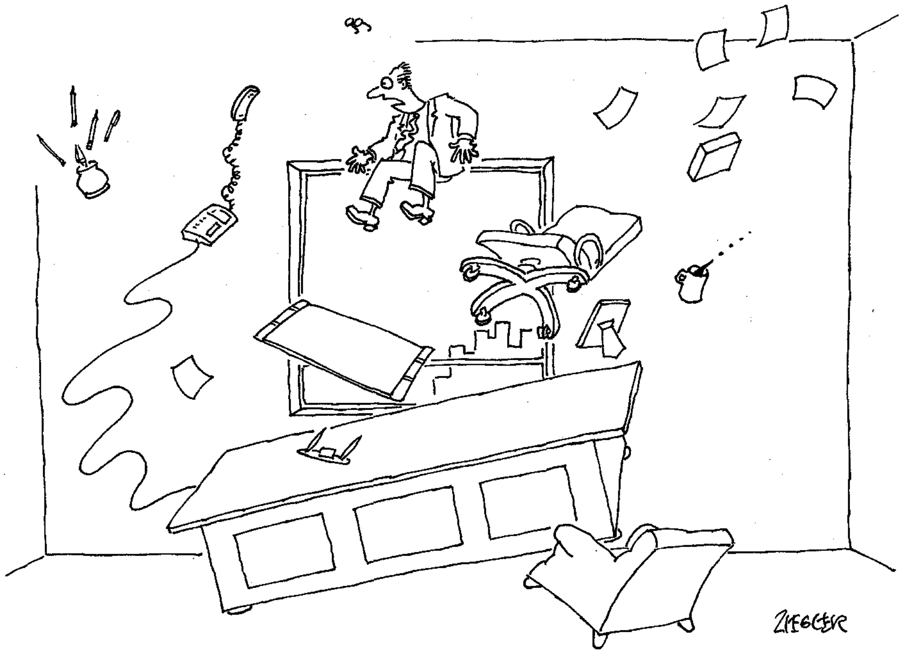
### THE FINALISTS

*"O.K., they're yours, but I still don't know where you got that fourth ace."*
Robert Dodge, Los Osos, Calif.

*"Keep your eye out for a blond kid with a laser pointer."*
Brian Oakes, Huntington Woods, Mich.

*"I think it's important for them to hear both sides of the debate."*
Barbara Siegel, Cambridge, Mass.

### THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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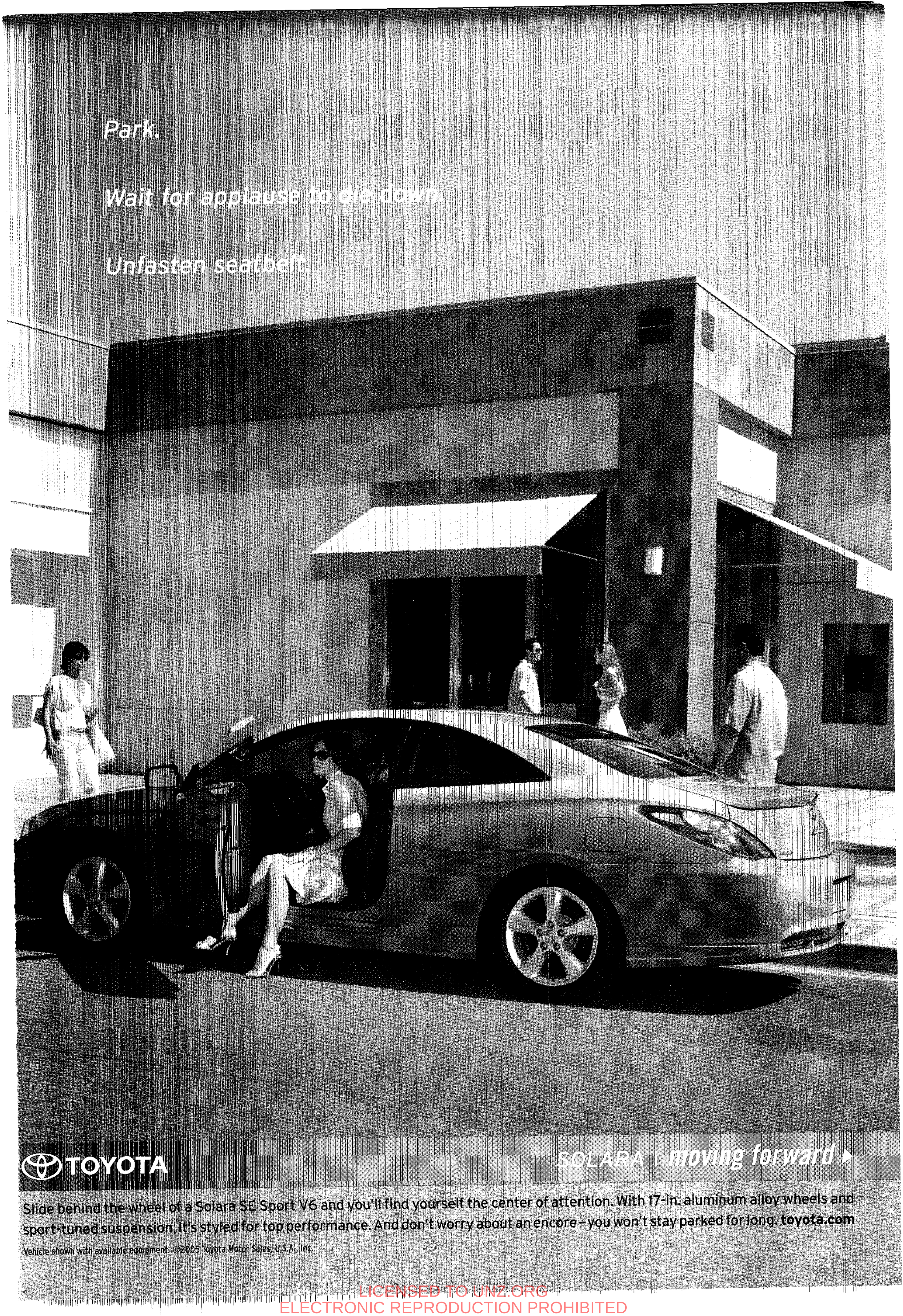
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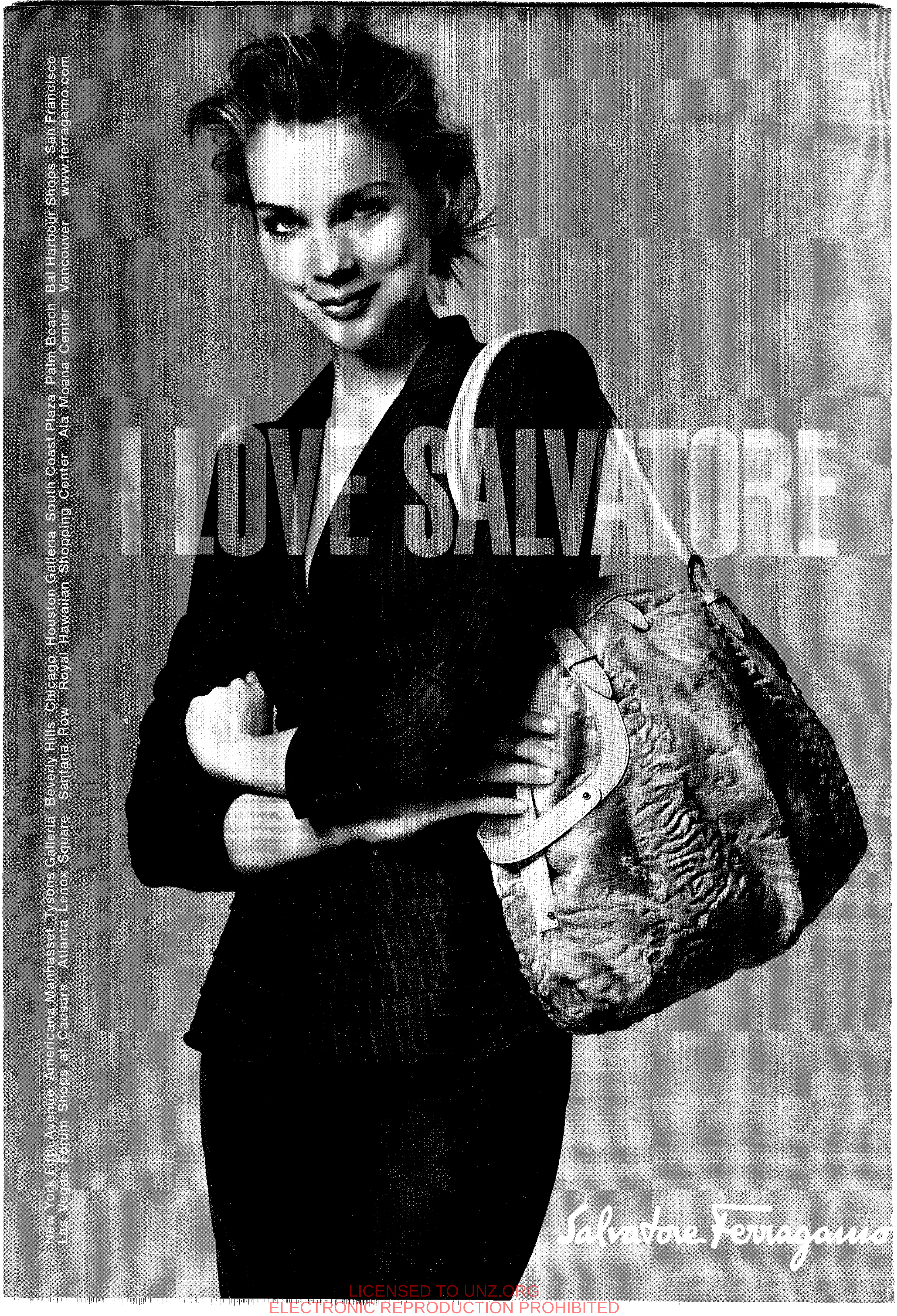

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